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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31ST 2015

THE GEM WISHES OUR READERS AND ADVERTISERS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR AND ALL GOOD FORTUNE IN 2016

ALL IN TOWN TO SEE THE HUNT!

Cowbridge High Street was completely packed on Boxing Day, as people turned out to see the start of the Boxing Day hunt. Picture by MIKE WILCOCK. (See pages 4 and 5 for more pictures).

Protest groups unimpressed by amended Darren Farm proposals

RECENT amendments to the proposal for housing at Darren Farm have not found favour with the town council and the local residents' action group (*see letters, page 4*).

One concern expressed is a topical one, that of increased flooding risk due to one aspect of the amended plans, a proposal to pipe rainwater from an area of Cowbridge town centre straight into the River Thaw.

Chris Pearce, the coordinator of the Cowbridge and Llanblethian Residents' Group, argues in his letter that the new proposal will increase the risk of flooding around Old Mason's Yard and further downstream at Llanblethian.

The letter from Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council, written by new town clerk David B Morris, also registers the council's concerns over flood risk, and goes on to detail its opposition to the overall plan on the grounds of increased traffic congestion and infrastructure issues, among others.

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LOCAL CHEF IS GIVEN SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR DRUGS OFFENCES

A COWBRIDGE hotel chef has been jailed for eight months, the sentence suspended for 18 months, at Cardiff Crown Court for drugs offences, *writes AJ SICLUNA*.

Jamie Davenport, 24, of Chestnut Avenue, St Athan, admitted offering to supply cannabis and possessing cannabis.

In addition to the suspended sentence, he was ordered to carry out 100 hours unpaid work and to pay costs of £400 plus a statutory surcharge of £100.

Said Judge Jonathan Furness: "There is great public concern at offences of this nature."

Prosecutor Jason Howells said two police officers were on mobile patrol in the Brackla area of Bridgend on May 14 when they saw a Vauxhall car parked near a school.

Davenport got out, and walked into a lane nearby well known for drug dealing.

Inside the car, said Mr Howells, there was a strong smell of cannabis.

Davenport was followed down the lane and was found to be carrying a number of cannabis 'deals'. He was arrested and said: "It's just possession of cannabis. Me and my mate went halves."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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A New Year wish...

'PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TOWARDS MEN' is a simple biblical message as pertinent today as it was 2,000 years ago, and one that can be embraced by every human being, of whatever faith – or none.

In a world riven by conflict and brutal acts of terrorism that saw 2015 drawing to a close – not only with natural disasters, but unprecedented scenes of mass migration from countries ravaged by war and repression in the Middle East – it was a message too little heard or heeded – ironically, in the very part of the world where it first gave birth.

At its root, of course, is tolerance and an acceptance that others may have quite a different outlook on life; for without this, 'peace on earth and goodwill towards men' will remain a worthy but fanciful notion trotted out once a year as a seasonal greeting – rather than a universal, everyday ethos for life.

Privileged as we all are in this country to enjoy the benefits of living in a democracy that enshrines freedom of speech, the start of a new year is both a fresh opportunity and an extra responsibility for all men and women of goodwill (and, in particular, those who would be in government), to respect this privilege, and set an example in how to resolve conflict and division by peaceable means.

There will soon be a highly visible test of this close to home, with elections to the Welsh National Assembly which (hopefully) will provide an opportunity to demonstrate this in open but civilised debate – free of vitriolic, personal attacks that have no place in this newspaper's editorial columns and serve only to muddy issues that divide society, rather than resolving them.

This, at least, is The GEM's fervent New Year wish, as 2016 dawns; and one with which we trust all our readers and letter writers (of whatever social or political persuasion) will concur and take note in the turbulent weeks and months ahead.

Between us, we can give a small demonstration that 'peace on earth and goodwill to all men' has not become an empty, modern day slogan – but even after 2,000 years remains a potent antidote to enmity.

Don John
Editor

Scouts' Post thanks helpers

THE Christmas Scout Post in Cowbridge had another successful year and, although it was very busy, it was a little down on 2014.

I would like to thank the staff in the various outlets which sell Scout stamps, for the extra work this makes for them. This is at the busiest time of the year for them and yet they have always been happy to do it again each year.

The sorting of cards was carried out by our regular sorters with a few welcome additions. The delivery of cards was by some 53 Scout group families and friends.

Without their help, it would be impossible to be part of the Cardiff and the Vale Scout Post. A big 'thank you' to all our helpers.

Once again, there were over 100 cards which could not be delivered because they were for addresses outside the delivery areas which are clearly stated on the leaflets.

There were cards for London, Cambridge, St David's and Kidwelly, as well as the more local ones for Bridgend, Pencoed, Corntown and Southerndown!

David Weber
(Unit assistant, Cowbridge Scout group)

Post made a profit

THE 1st Penmark with Porthkerry Scout group would like to say a massive thank you to all those who helped with the Scout Christmas post this year.

It was another successful year, with the group making a profit of over £1,300; this would not be possible without those of you who purchase stamps at outlets in Rhoose and the surrounding villages, and those who help sort and deliver the cards.

The group would also like to thank the outlets as without them selling stamps and collecting post, the service would not operate as well as it does: 1st Penmark with Porthkerry Beavers and Cubs also took part in the Lifeguards' NSPCC concert at the community centre in Rhoose.

The group will start back around the second week of January. We would again like to thank everyone for their help and support during 2015 and wish everyone a Happy New year.

If anyone would like to know more about the group, or to get involved in any way, contact the Group Scout Leader at: Gsl@penmarkscouts.org.uk

Colette Raymond

Christmas day just the start

I AM delighted that at last the true meaning of Christmas has been celebrated locally with services, and parades with carols up to Llanblethian Castle, but would remind everyone of the 12 Days of Christmas.

Christmas day, when we celebrated the birth of baby Jesus, was the beginning; "The 12 Days of Christmas" started on Boxing Day (December 26) and will go on to Twelfth Night on January 6 – and that period is the true Christmastide.

Having lived for many years abroad, I know how they celebrate this Twelfth Night, with colourful parades of wise men, throwing goodies to the crowds, and amazing firework displays.

I hope in the future we have our parades and celebrations, and even fireworks, perhaps, at the proper time – and that all the shop window displays and colourful festive lights will stay to the end.

(*Name and address supplied*)

Readers' Letters

Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL or email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

• *LETTERS AND E-MAILS MUST INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS AND A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER.*

IMPORTANT: We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. An email address alone is not sufficient! We will (*in certain circumstances*) protect a writer's identity, if requested.

'FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS' ARE ON THE UP AND UP!

ON behalf of 'Friends and Neighbours', I would like to take the opportunity of thanking both Barry Town Council and the Vale Council for their support during 2015 and also The GEM, for all its help with publicity for our events.

Throughout 2015, the Friends and Neighbours group has grown from strength to strength – we always have a waiting list due to its popularity.

Special thanks to Age Connects Cardiff, and Vale Senior Health Shop for their support during the year.

I must also thank all those businesses and organisations who supported Friends and Neighbours' recent Christmas party held at Brynhill Golf Club, by way of sponsorship and gratuities, including Asda, Renishaw, Barry Rotary Club, Aberthaw Power Station, Morrisons and Tesco.

I must thank all my wonderful volunteers, Marlene, Chris, Andrea, Gail, Jen, Sue, Pam, Joyce and Phyl, who give up their time to help with meetings, trips and lunches etc. Without their help, the group could not function.

A big thank you to both Alun Cairns, MP and Jane Hutt, AM who have supported us throughout our busy year; and last, but not least, our loyal members of Friend and Neighbours!

It has been an excellent year for us and I hope 2016 will be just as memorable. I wish you all a healthy New Year.

Gay Fifield

Lack of hatred to be applauded

ON a world topic, the recently-released Guantánamo Bay detainee, Shaker Aamer, has told the British Press that all Jihadi extremists should "get out of Britain".

That statement, coming from a Muslim who for 14 years was held without trial, but appears to have no hatred in his heart towards Britain, has to be applauded.

I wonder if others will now come to the fore and publicly agree with him.

The question I would ask is – what was the sense in France, a country of 64 million people, for extremists to kill 130 people in Paris, the percentage of that slaughter being 0.0002 per cent.

It certainly was a futile and barbaric act and perhaps the words suggested by Mr Shaker Aamer will see the demise of the ridiculous belief that extremists in this country, or anywhere else, can rule the world.

FMD Knill,
Pendoylan.

Bank closure in Llantwit Major

WITH reference to the planned closure of Barclays Bank in Llantwit Major, as an account holder at the branch for more than 25 years, I did initially think of writing to their CEO in protest, but decided this would be pointless, since the bank has already made up its corporate mind.

I felt no strong inclination to lie down in front of the Barclays steamroller.

One of the things which I find offensive in all this is that the letter which I received from Barclays, advising me of the closure, was signed by their 'Community Leader, south Wales'.

It would seem that his job involves depriving communities of their banking facilities. If ever there are awards granted for the most ill-considered job titles, this must surely be a winner.

But, no doubt following the closure of the branch in Llantwit Major, his annual banker's bonus is safe enough.

We should look on the bright side: the savings arising from this branch closure will release funds within the bank to part-fund their recent substantial fine from the FCA, to say nothing of their sponsorship of football.

After all the Premier League is not exactly cash-rich… er, did I really say that?

David T Roberts, Sigingstone.

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HIGH TIDE TIMES
(UNTIL JANUARY 7)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
31 Thur	09.57	8.7	10.21	8.3
01 Fri	10.39	8.4	11.10	8.0
02 Sat	11.29	8.0	11.57	7.8
03 Sun			12.31	7.8
04 Mon	01.17	7.6	13.48	7.8
05 Tues	02.31	7.8	14.58	7.9
06 Wed	03.32	8.1	15.53	8.2
07 Thur	04.22	8.4	16.39	8.6

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

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Cowbridge Male Voice Choir performs two special concerts in space of a week

Sandra Williams, choir accompanist.

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir.

ON December 7, the annual Christmas carol concert in support of Bobath children's therapy centre Wales was held at St Mary's Church, Whitchurch, Cardiff.

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir had the privilege of joining Mr Peter Karrie – who besides his theatrical activities has taken up the role of ambassador for Bobath.

The centre provides support in many forms for those children who suffer from cerebral palsy.

Concerts such as this provide additional funds for equipment, therapists, carers and helpers to continue their tremendous efforts for the children.

After a bidding prayer a welcome was given by Claire Brown and Nia Richards – organisers for Bobath Wales (Nia is off to New Zealand shortly).

The concert commenced with that wonderful carol 'O Come All Ye Faithful' with choir and congregation, which was followed by the choir singing 'Divine Brahma' from *The Pearl Fishers*, 'You Raise Me Up' and a great rendition of 'Cwm Rhondda'.

A reading from *The Nutcracker* was given by Fiona Haines, a Bobath parent. Mr Peter Karrie sang a selection from his repertoire despite suffering from 'man flu'.

A reading from Isaiah Chapter 9 was given by Mr Derek Redwood, a Bobath volunteer.

The choir and congregation then gave a quiet yet warm rendition of 'Silent Night. This was followed by a reading from the gospel of Saint Luke Chapter 1 which was read in Welsh by Helen Evans, another Bobath Wales volunteer.

The next item was a bit of a surprise – the song 'Santa Clause Is Coming To Town' performed by the Bobath Wales staff choir accompanied by Santa's Little Helpers – truly memorable.

Peter Karrie then continued with an extract from Valentine Davies' *Miracle On 34th Street*.

Everybody sang the carol 'Ding Dong Merrily On High', followed by a reading from the gospel of Saint Luke Chapter 2 read by Mike Ryan of Sweet Bakery – a supporter of Bobath Wales.

Cowbridge choir then gave their renditions of 'O Gymru', 'Cavalry of the Steppes' and 'Tydi a Roddaist', letting those wonderful 'amens' rise to heaven above.

A reading from the gospel of Saint Matthew chapter 2 was read by the councillor for Rhiwbina Jayne Cowan.

A further performance was given by Peter Karrie, who stood up well with his man flu!

The last reading, 'Dear Santa', was read beautifully by Dawn Forbes, senior therapist at Bobath Wales Centre.

The concert concluded with everybody singing 'Hark The Herald Angels Sing'. The Christmas spirit had truly arrived!

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir's second concert was held on December 12 at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cathays Park, Cardiff, on behalf of Blood Wise Wales, formerly Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research.

Joining them in this prestigious event was the Nidus Children's Choir and Cantorion Pontyclun Ladies' Choir.

The hosts for the evening were Nicola Heywood-Thomas and Arfon Haines Davies. The opening for the concert was the carol 'Joy to the World' with Cowbridge Male Voice Choir continuing with their opener for this season 'Divine Brahma', 'You Raise Me Up', Cwm Rhondda', 'Angels' and 'Nazareth'.

Next on were Cantorion Pontyclun Ladies Choir who were appreciated by the receptive audience.

The Nidus Children's Choir stole the concert as their quality and performance were excellent and much appreciated by the audience and other participating choirs alike.

After an interval, choirs and audience sang 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' with The Nidus Children's Choir continuing to provide such lovely musical tones.

The Cantorion Pontyclun Ladies' Choir followed and were truly appreciated by the audience.

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir ended with 'O Gymru', 'Cavalry of the Steppes', 'I Believe' and 'Tydi a Roddaist'.

Dr Tom Jones concluded the evening with thanks to all who made the concert possible.

The audience, choirs and dignitaries then sang the national anthem *'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau'*.

They were two worthwhile concerts for the start of Christmas.

A Happy New Year to all from Cowbridge Male Voice Choir!

KM

CHRISTMAS CARD ENTRIES TESTED THE REGIONAL AM!

Y BONT FAEN Primary School has played host to a visit by regional AM, Andrew RT Davies, after pupils won a competition to design the AM and Leader of the Welsh Conservatives' Christmas cards.

Two winners were selected from a competitive pool of entrants. The winners (pictured with Mr Davies and their designs) were Rose Price (left) and Seren Morgan (right). They each received a certificate and a voucher for WH Smith.

Mr Davies said the overall standard was extremely high and that the children should all be proud of their efforts: "I was delighted to hold my annual Christmas Card competition with one of the schools that is local to me, Y Bont Faen Primary School. The standards were exceptionally high and it was very tough to pick two winners from the large number we received.

"That said, Rose's and Seren's designs were thoroughly deserving winners and these will be going right across the country, even landing at number 10 Downing Street to the Prime Minister, David Cameron.

"I would like to thank the pupils for taking part and the headteacher, Julia Adams, for giving me the opportunity to visit the school which is held in such high regard in the local community."

ABOVE, right: Andrew RT Davies AM, with winners Rose Price (on left) and Seren Morgan.

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HUGE SPECTACLE AS THE GLAMORGAN HUNT RIDES THROUGH COWBRIDGE

THERE were Boxing Day crowds in Cowbridge High Street to witness the gathering of the Glamorgan Hunt.

As you can see from Mike Wilcock's images of the day, riders and horses, the hounds, and the large crowds, made for an impressive spectacle.

Photographs by MIKE WILCOCK

Darren Farm – TOWN COUNCIL WANTS A VOTE

READERS of The GEM will be aware of the Town Council's strong opposition to the proposed Darren Farm development.

It would also wish to emphasise to the residents and business community of Cowbridge and Llanblethian that it is strongly opposed to the subsequent amendments to the original plans.

The reasons for our objections are as follows:

• The adverse impact that such a development would have on the additional local traffic, increasing congestion and reducing the availability of parking in the town centre.

• The increased pressure on the surrounding utility infrastructure especially the sewerage system and the risk of flooding due to the run off from the surrounding landscape.

• The need to increase the capacity of the local schools since there is no timescale as to when a new school would be built on this development and by whom.

Overall the development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape in this area, affecting the 'identity' of Cowbridge as being a market town, since the current working farm would disappear and, consequently, the loss of agricultural land and employment.

The Town Council has responded twice to the Vale Council planning department, strongly objecting to the original development plans and recently to the proposed planning amendments.

The council has asked to be present and speak at any site meeting and has given notice that it wishes to object when this application is to be discussed at the Vale Council planning meeting.

Mr David B Morris, Town Clerk
(On behalf of the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council)

New threat of flooding

THE recently-amended CEG planning application (2014/01505/OUT) for a development of 475 houses and a link road on Darren Farm, Cowbridge, raises a new threat of flooding which could negate the benefits of the successful flood alleviation scheme installed in 2007 to protect the town.

The amended application provides for a 'Rainscape Scheme' to collect the surface water from a large section (0.227ha, 0.56 acres) of Cowbridge High Street (between Eagle Lane and River View Chinese restaurant in Penny Lane) and pipe it into the River Thaw.

This drainage proposal has been negotiated by the developer and agreed with Welsh Water in order to take this surface water out of the overloaded sewerage system, and enable the developer to make an early sewerage pipe connection, routed from the first phase of the proposed housing development, to a connection point in the field below Geraints Close, before the Cowbridge waste water and treatment works upgrade scheduled for March 2018.

The proposed 'Rainscape Scheme' would put the surface water from the High Street into the river, downstream from the flood alleviation scheme control embankment but upstream from the houses in Llanblethian, which suffered frequent serious flooding before the alleviation scheme was installed.

This then, according to our expert advice, would reintroduce the potential for damaging flooding in periods of heavy rain for those residents in Llanblethian who benefit from the alleviation scheme.

It could also reintroduce flooding potential for those previously flooded properties (eg in Old Masons Yard and Middlegate) at the eastern end of Cowbridge, due to overflowing of the raised levels of water in the river.

Those residents and property owners who wish to object to the proposed Rainscape scheme should write or email, before January 7, quoting the above planning application number to:
Mrs J Crofts, Vale of Glamorgan Planning Control, Dock Office, Barry Docks, CF63 4RT;
or email:
JMCrofts@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
and/or Mr Owain George, Development Control, Developer Services, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, PO Box 3146, Linea, Fortran Road, Cardiff, CF30 0EH. Email: *Owain.George@dwrcymru.com*.

Chris Pearce
(Coordinator, Cowbridge and Llanblethian Residents Group)

Suspended sentence given to chef

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

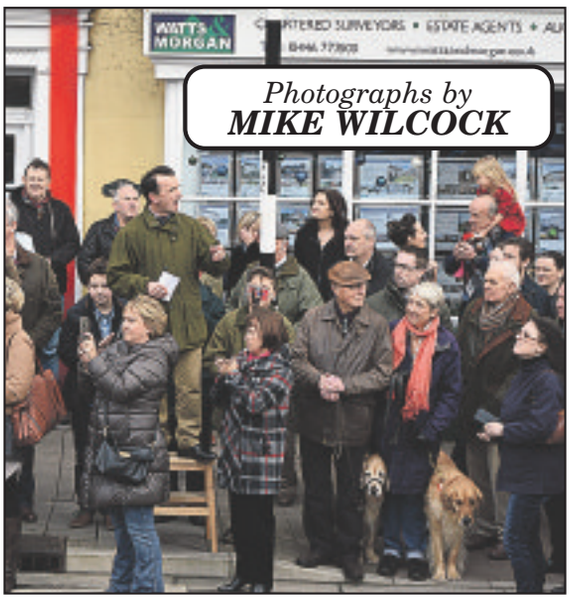
Further amounts of cannabis were found in the car and Davenport's mobile phone contained text messages concerning the supply of drugs "on a low level".

Said Mr Howells: "He was effectively a street dealer."

He was said to have previous convictions for assault and causing criminal damage.

His solicitor, Robert Chudleigh, urged the court to pass a suspended sentence.

Crowds welcome hunt in Cowbridge



Photographs by **MIKE WILCOCK**

MASTER Jacky Thomas leads hounds down the High Street on Boxing Day. Image by **HEATHER MARCH.**

• *THE GLAMORGAN HUNT'S TRADITIONAL BOXING DAY MEET DREW THE CUSTOMARY CROWDS OF SIGHTSEERS INTO THE COWBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE*

Donation to choir

THE Cantorian Pontyclun Ladies Choir has been granted £450 from Inter Link Rhondda Cynon Taf to help its community and charitable work.

Llangan Primary one of the top 5!

LLANGAN Primary, near Cowbridge, has become the fifth Vale school to be awarded the National Quality Award (NQA) for its participation in the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS).

The Welsh Government-funded scheme encourages schools to promote health topics such as fitness, mental wellbeing and substance misuse awareness. The NQA is the highest accolade in the scheme and recognises the school's commitment to incorporating positive health messages into the daily culture.

Currently, 63 schools and settings across the Vale are signed up to the scheme, including nurseries, primaries and secondary schools. Each school must complete five stages before being eligible for the NQA, and must demonstrate a 'whole school' approach that also benefits teachers, parents and the community at large.

Headteacher Steve Williams said: "It is marvellous to be recognised for the good work that we do in promoting healthy lifestyles. In Llangan Primary School, we take pride in supporting our pupils in new and innovative ways to develop their learning. The award demonstrates our dedication to the wellbeing of pupils, members of our school and our local community."

"Steve Williams is joining Sully Primary as headteacher in the new year and said he looks forward to supporting the Healthy Schools Scheme in his new role. His legacy at Llangan Primary looks set to ensure the wellbeing of children and staff for years to come," a spokesperson said.

SEASONAL FUN AT SOUTHERNDOWN WI

SEASONAL music welcomed members to an evening of Christmas cheer, including mulled wine and Christmas fare, at the December meeting of Southerndown WI.

More than 30 members heard president Michele, tell of the range of activities in which they can be involved during 2016.

Rhiannon, our secretary, updated us on correspondence from the Glamorgan Federation and our treasurer confirmed that our finances are in good order.

An important part of the meeting was the selection of the resolution our WI supports. Chris read out details of the eight options and a vote was held. Our result will be forwarded to the Federation for inclusion in the national Resolution selection process.

There was an opportunity to try our hand at willow work to make the basis of a Christmas wreath – ably guided by Sheila – while Christmas carols were sung.

A great programme of activities is on offer in Southerndown WI during 2016. It commences in January with a talk from a new member, Judith, on her favourite pastime of diving – and she promises to bring some of the equipment she uses!

January is the month when annual subscriptions are due; the meeting will be held on Thursday, January 14 at 7.15pm in St Brides Major Church Hall. New members are always welcome.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all members – past, present and future – a joyful Christmas. **PM**

Pudding party held

OUR Lady and St Illtyd with St Cadoc Catholic parish got into the festive spirit on December 6 when parishioners celebrated the feast of St Nicholas, the first Santa Claus.

A surprise visit from Santa added to the joyous atmosphere when Ian Hunt of Filco Foods presented the parish with a donation of £250 from the charity Making A Difference Locally.

Then, following a buffet of traditional sweet and savoury puddings, as much as you could eat, Perla Kirkham, recently qualified as a Laughter Therapist, demonstrated the benefits of therapeutic laughter as an excellent way to reduce stress and help cope with and survive a stressful lifestyle.

Laughter provides a full-scale workout for your muscles and unleashes a rush of stress-busting endorphins.

Since our bodies cannot distinguish between real and fake laughter, anything that makes us giggle has a positive impact, which indeed it did!

Once relaxed, everyone sat back to enjoy a glass of sherry and mince pies while Ewa and Gareth Thomas enthralled us with the story of St Nicholas.

In the story, we see the connections between St Nicholas and Santa Claus, as they both give gifts surreptitiously in the dark of night, with the gold coins landing in the daughters' stockings which were hanging by the fire to dry.

In recognition of this, everyone was given a bag with a chocolate coin to go home.

A fun-filled afternoon was enjoyed by everyone who attended and £572.15 was raised for parish funds. **EH**

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Aberthin Tractor Boys fight the elements on their annual post-Christmas run

THE Aberthin Tractor Boys held their annual post-Christmas run on Sunday, December 27.

They braved the incessant torrents of rain starting off from Talygarn, heading through the lanes of the Vale of Glamorgan, and ending up at The Bush at St Hilary for a well earned hot cup of tea.

They then made the return journey to Talygarn – wet but happy!

PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

OTHER PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

E-Mail: ffotoimage@tiscali.co.uk
Telephone 07791 228684
www.ffotoimage.co.uk

Councillors draw theValePlus raffle

LOCAL councillors from Barry, Dinas Powys and Llantwit Major teamed up to help draw the ValePlus Christmas raffle recently.

"ValePlus would like to thank everybody who has contributed both to the Christmas raffle and the organisation's success in 2015," a spokesperson said.

PICTURED: Steve Thomas of ValePlus (left) with Dinas Powys chairman, Coun Keith Hatton, and Barry councillor, Coun Ian Johnson. Coun Michael Mason from Llantwit Major was also at the draw.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Your local correspondent is
NANCY DAVIDGE
"Tyneuydd", Llangan.
(01656) 860303
TREOES, LLANGAN & ST MARY HILL

Farewell Mr Williams!

WHAT a lovely surprise awaited the headteacher of Llangan school, Mr Steve Williams, on Thursday, December 18.

Every member of the teaching and clerical staff and special guest, former head Mary Noyes and I were present as the children played their part to the music of the ever popular film *The Sound of Music* which was shown on the screen.

Mr Williams was presented with lovely gifts, some a little unusual, but one we all thought most appropriate was a school bell which will be useful at Mr Williams' new school in Penarth.

He takes up his new post in the new year. I am sure there will be interesting inter-school activities between Llangan and Penarth in the future!

Proud great grandmother!

READERS of The GEM will no doubt have seen the picture of three young ladies who had their long hair cut to make wigs for children with cancer and other illnesses.

I understand £400 was raised in the first week. If any other reader would like to contribute to this very worthy cause go to: mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/GaryBacon/.

If you do not own a computer, please forward to my address and I will forward it on.

Local churches

ALL the local church services during the Christmas period were well attended.

And now from me, to all the readers of my weekly news, a very happy new year.

LLANTWIT MAJOR RUGBY CLUB IS THE PLACE FOR A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!

PHOTOGRAPHS by ANDY WICKS
Telephone 07855 374478

LLANTWIT MAJOR Rugby Club held its Christmas time celebration on Boxing Day and there was a huge crowd.

A tribute band, Stereophonish, entertained revellers.

As you can see, local photographer Andy Wicks captured people in high spirits, proving without doubt that Christmas is "the most wonderful time of the year".

No row in council

FURTHER to your article in The GEM newspaper, Thursday December 17 headed 'Llantwit First says that cost of by-election is a 'complete waste of money' ', could I please clarify a point.

In your first paragraph you state – 'A row has broken out in Llantwit Major Town Council'. I can assure you that no row has broken out, and at no time has candidate selection or the cost of this election been discussed at any full town council meeting.

RE Quinn (Mrs)
Town Clerk

GEM note: The by-election nominations closed on December 14, and the election will take place on January 14.

Go to the **Cowbridge GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
www.cowbridge-today.co.uk

CALUM HARNESSES THE POWER OF THE INTERNET TO HELP THE HOMELESS

Calum Young with some of the presents that he was able to deliver to the homeless.

A COWBRIDGE student harnessed the power of the 'on line community' over Christmas to make a real difference to homeless people in Cardiff.

While many people were at home Christmas Eve, counting down the hours until Santa arrived, local teenager Calum Young was delivering some gifts of his own.

A few weeks before Christmas, 16-year-old Calum, a Cowbridge Comprehensive School student, set up a donations page to raise money to buy items for some of the capital city's homeless.

Calum told The GEM that the generosity of many people and businesses in such a short time was "fantastic".

He said that the community of St Mary Church agreed to let him set up a collection point in the church, and vast amounts of clothing, bags and blankets were donated.

The night shelter in Cardiff were very pleased to accept the donations Calum delivered. They had given a wish list of foods and items which would benefit the people they work with.

Calum said that he managed to tick all of their boxes, as well as provide other items they had not expected, including inflatable pillows, drinks bottles and blank Christmas cards.

When Calum arrived at the shelter at 7pm on Christmas Eve, even the assistant manager of the night shelter was surprised as to how much Calum had brought.

Rhoose residents put their concerns to the Vale AM

Mr and Mrs Dolman meet the AM.

VALE AM Jane Hutt has been meeting Rhoose residents to discuss a way forward to improve bus services in the Fonmon Road area.

When the village bus operator withdrew its services across the Vale, the residents living alongside Fonmon Road were particularly badly affected. The replacement New Adventure Travel service 303/304 through Rhoose has been very much welcomed but, due to the length of the service is not able to serve Fonmon Road.

The AM met local residents Mr and Mrs Dolman to discuss needs and options to address the situation.

She said: "I am raising these issues with the Vale Council and New Adventure Travel to see if we can find a way forward."

Vale housing scheme wins national award

THE Vale of Glamorgan's first extra care housing scheme, 'Golau Caredig' was named as Wales' best 'housing-led regeneration' project at a recent industry awards ceremony.

Built in partnership by Hafod Care Association and the Vale Council, the scheme has replaced the former derelict Theatre Royal cinema in Barry with 42 much-needed homes for older people, and created a landmark building for the town.

The accolade was presented by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Cymru at the 2015 Welsh Housing Awards.

The Vale Council seeks feedback on its corporate plan

FOLLOWING a Welsh Government budget announcement the Vale Council has launched a public consultation on its spending priorities for the next four years.

In the wake of a further two per cent cut to its funding the Vale Council estimates it will have to save at least £18m over the next two years.

This is in addition to the £36m that has been cut from its budget since 2010.

To help address this issue the council has devised a new corporate plan which sets out how it intends to work to deliver services across the Vale of Glamorgan while also making the significant savings required.

It is now asking residents to share their views on the objectives set out in this plan. The outcome of the consultation will help inform which areas of the authority's work will be prioritised in the future.

Coun Neil Moore, Leader of the Council, said: "Despite the huge cuts to our budget the Vale Council was this year ranked as the top performing local authority in Wales. We have an excellent track record of delivering quality services efficiently and this means we are very confident that not only can we overcome the financial challenges ahead of us but that we can continue to deliver good quality essential services to residents, businesses and visitors."

Vale of Glamorgan residents can find out more information about the consultation on the council's corporate plan and budget online at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/budget.

Residents can have their say by completing an online survey or by sharing their views in writing or by telephone. The consultation will close on January 20.

'WELSH ASSEMBLY'S BALANCE SHEET'

I AM mystified by Marc Delaney's letter (December 10) on the benefits the Welsh Assembly has given us.

Let's look at what it has 'achieved' so far: a failing education service... Pisa ranks Wales' education the worst in the UK; Wales has highest child poverty rate, in the UK; workplace GVA per head in Wales in 2014 was 71.4 per cent of the UK average, the lowest among the devolved countries and English regions. This was down 1.1 percentage points over the year.

Council tax year on year rises across Wales, when Scotland and many areas in England have benefited from council tax freezes. Where is the benefit to housholders across Wales?

I am not sure what Mr Delaney means by creeping privatisation of the English NHS. What we have in Wales is a failing health service.

We should perhaps commend the National Assembly as it has bought an airport – or should that be we have paid for an airport, which is now receiving huge subsidies?

We have free prescriptions so that our GPs can now issue prescriptions for paracetamol, which can be bought in supermarkets for 40 pence. The cost of those prescriptions alone exceeded £4m.

I am grateful for Mr Delaney for bringing the Abolish the Welsh Assembly party to my attention. I will certainly look into that organisation in 2016. In the meantime I wish all of your readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John A Turner, Rhoose.

Debut judge makes candid assessments

BARRY Camera Club's November programme began with a trip to Merthyr Camera Club for a three-way print and digital image battle with Merthyr and Rhiwbina camera clubs, where we came a creditable second, narrowly losing out to a very strong Merthyr entry.

The club has had a talk by Keith Sharples, entitled 'Monochrome – What Works'. He explained to us in great detail his thought processes behind the planning and execution of his shots and the various techniques he employs.

Allen R Lloyd gave a presentation entitled 'Essential Photoshop'. Adobe Photoshop, although not used by all members present largely due to its cost, is a very sophisticated image manipulation computer program that allows photographers to make a myriad of changes to the image before it is either printed or projected.

The month concluded with our monthly competition night, when the judge was Howard Evans, who was very complimentary of the standard of images presented. This was Howard's debut on the judging circuit and he gave very detailed and concise criticisms.

Some members thought he was a little overly-critical on one or two occasions and also thought he had completely missed the intention of the photographer, but overall, it was obvious that he had put a great deal of effort into his deliberations.

AWARDS

Monochrome print: This was a closely-fought contest with some very high marks being awarded, however, Howard awarded 20 points and first place to Brian Trego for 'Flow Lines', second place and 19 points to Glenn Porter for 'Mind The Step' and third place with 18 points to Mike Lewis for 'Warning Signs'. Very narrowly missing the prizes and awarded a 'highly commended' rating were Brian Trego for his 'To The Bell Tower' and Barbra Archdale-Smith for her 'Imogen Rose'. Colour Print: First prize and 20 points went to Sarah Savage for 'Modern Fairytale', second place and 19 points went to Brian Trego for his 'Watchful' and third spot was another award for Sarah Savage who was awarded 18 points for her 'One Wood', narrowly beating Roy Carr's 'Heritage Sunset' which also scored 18 points and was rated 'highly commended'. The Projected Image section was, as always, the most contested section with far more entries than either of the print categories. Howard awarded 20 points and first place to Tina Haydon with 'On Silent Links', Brian Trego gained second place scoring 19 points with 'Skye Treeline' and in third place with 18 points was Sarah Savage with 'The Flower Inspector'. Howard felt that these three images were clear winners and did not need to make any highly commended awards in this category.

Barry Camera Club meets every Friday from 7pm to 9.30pm at St Francis Millennium Centre, Porth-y-Castell, Barry Garden Suburb, Barry, CF62 6NX. For more information, visit our website www.barrycameraclub.co.uk

RN

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMMITTEE NEEDS MORE NEW MEMBERS

IN 1953, to commemorate the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the Vale of Glamorgan Best Kept Village Competition was established.

Since then the competition has served the villages of the Vale well, bringing communities together and promoting beautifully kept villages.

However, over recent years fewer villages have taken part in the competition.

The committee that runs the competition now needs new members and a new secretary.

There is a danger that there will not be a competition in 2016 unless new people come forward to join the committee and take an active part in organising the competition.

If you have an interest in village life in the Vale and can commit your enthusiasm and time to this delightful event, please come to the meeting to discuss the future of the competition and how you can join in and help.

Meeting will take place on January 25 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Cowbridge Town Hall.

Please email the secretary at carole.alexander1@hotmail.co.uk for further information and to let us know you are coming.

CA

'Scrap position of Mayor' *SAYS COUNCILLOR*

A BARRY councillor has renewed his calls for the role Vale Mayor to be scrapped in a bid to save money.

Independent councillor Richard Bertin, who represents the town's Court Ward insists the authority needs to be realistic and start thinking about the future.

The costs for keeping the Vale Mayor 'in face' during 2014/15 were salaries at £67,300, transport costs at £19,300 and hospitality totalling £18,000.

Coun Bertin said: "The role of Mayor is no longer cost effective when you consider it costs around £100k per year to keep them in office just to raise around £13k for charity per year.

"The Mayor role is merely ceremonial and if you ask me old fashioned. The leader of the council could pick up most of the work, including visits and opening new venues."

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
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Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

Development that may affect a Conservation Area/ Datblygu a allai effeithio ar Ardal Gadwraeth

Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01446/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Proposals for building alterations to existing dormer roof extension
Location:/Lleoliad:	42, Stanwell Road, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth	Penarth

Application(s) of General Interest/ Ceisiadau o Ddiddordeb Cyffredinol

Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01449/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuilding, erection of 30 apartments, new access and alterations to adjacent parking area, provision of a footpath link, replacement tree planting and landscaping and associated works
Location:/Lleoliad:	Northcliffe Lodge, Northcliffe Drive, Penarth

Details may be inspected for 21 days at the address given below, or via **http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/**

Gall manylion eu harchwilio am 21 diwrnod yn y cyfeiriad a roddir isod, neu drwy **http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/**

Dated / Dyddiedig: 31 December, 2015

V. L. Robinson
Operational Manager, Regeneration and Planning,
Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry. CF63 4RT

LOOKING BACK – AND FORWARD TO ASSEMBLY'S CHALLENGES IN 2016…

ASSEMBLY NOTES

by **Jane Hutt**
AM (Minister for Finance)

IT is good to reflect on events leading up to Christmas 2015, as well as looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in 2016.

The weeks leading up to the first week in December were taken up with Welsh Government budget preparation following the late spending review statement by the Chancellor on November 25, which included further real term cuts of 4.5 per cent for Wales.

On December 8, I made my statement in the Senedd presenting the draft Welsh Government Budget for 2016/17, with an announcement at the heart of the budget of an extra £300m for the Welsh Health Service.

To ensure we are integrating health and social care and safeguarding local services, I announced an additional £21m for social services, alongside protection for the 'Supporting People' programme, widely welcomed by all those who support vulnerable people in Wales.

Funding for schools in Wales will remain at 1% above changes to the Welsh budget overall and a further £5m for further education and 2,500 apprenticeships were also key highlights, as well as protecting Flying Start and concessionary fares.

On December 9, the Minister for Public Services announced the provisional Local Government settlement with a 'better than expected' outcome, with local authorities receiving £4.1bn next year.

Our Welsh Government budget focuses on the services which mean most to the people of Wales so the NHS and education are priorities, but social services and housing are also key.

The announcement of £26m to extend Help to Buy Cymru which has helped so many people buy their new homes in the Vale, was well received and also the £21m for the social housing grant to build more social housing in Wales.

Our spending on capital projects such as 21st century schools, continues apace as we saw in November, when we joined pupils at Llantwit Major Comprehensive School to dig the turf for their brand new school, alongside the primary school and Ysgol Dewi Sant.

Over the past few weeks, I have been able to enjoy the talents and skills of people across the Vale - starting up new businesses like Cobbles, set up by Chloe Francis in Ogmore with a bursary from the Inspire Awards backed by the Waterloo Foundation and Vale of Glamorgan Council.

In Barry, the inspiring and award-winning Pump House has seen residents moving into the flats and the Academy Espresso open its doors. Nearby, the High Street market is also becoming a regular feature-drawing people to the shops and businesses who work tirelessly for their customers.

The new Post Office in Cowbridge has been a great boost to the town and I am continuing to campaign for a new post office in Barry, to replace the ones that closed in 2015 in Highlight Park and Colcot Road.

One of the highlights of the Christmas season was the staging of *The Christmas Story* by Barry Churches resulting in 12 performances during the week of December 14-19 attracting 1,700 people to St Marys Church. It was also wonderful to join members of the Rainbow Group, when I attended a performance during the week.

I was also pleased to visit the mosque in Barry to greet the members and learn more about their faith, their needs and concerns at this troubled time in the world.

As we welcomed Syrian refugees to Wales before Christmas, I was glad to hear the message from Archbishop Barry Morgan: "The refugee crisis is a crisis for all of us because in the end we are all part of one worldwide human family.

In a family, when one member suffers, we all suffer and the least we can do is to offer whatever help we can."

A further example of the tremendous goodwill of people in the Vale was the Big Wrap initiative by Coastlands Church, with 500 Christmas parcels being provided for nearly 300 children in need in the Vale.

With Christmas concerts taking place in schools and churches across the Vale, and the children of Gladstone School singing to the residents of Golau Caredig, and the children of St Athan Primary singing to the over 50s group – all generations were coming together before Christmas with long lasting links being forged.

The challenges of 2016 are significant. As Finance Minister, I will be progressing the discussions and debate to secure the Welsh Government budget for 2016/17 and a fairer funding deal with the UK Government.

In the Vale, I will be promoting a new visionary use of Barry Hospital to enable medical students to start their training early in a community hospital setting.

I will be continuing my support for the regeneration of Barry, which will be uplifted further by the announcement before Christmas on the success of another campaign I have been supporting to replace the footbridge at Barry Town Station with a new accessible crossing.

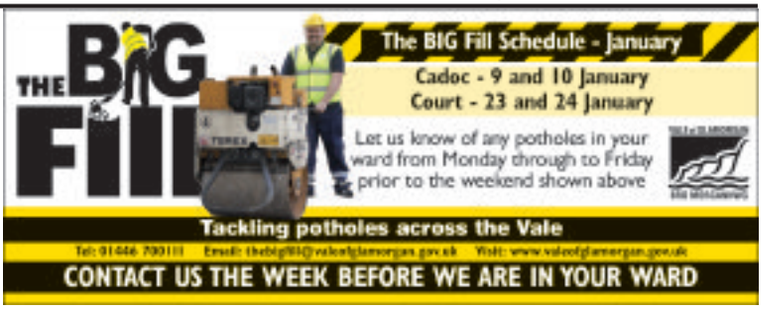
I will also continue to press for a reversal of the decision to close Barclays Bank in Llantwit Major, with an open surgery on Friday, January 8 at 4pm-6pm in the Heritage Centre.

Happy New Year/Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

COWBRIDGE HISTORY SOCIETY MEETING

THE society's next lecture will be on Friday, January 8, at 7.30pm in the Lesser Hall of Town Hall, Cowbridge.

The subject will be Cartooning in the First World War and the speaker is Professor Chris Williams, of Cardiff University: all welcome!



‘Don’t use hot water cold cure!’ ADVICE FROM SURGEONS

CHILDREN as young as eight months are ending up in hospital with burns after breathing in steam for coughs and colds, only for scalding water to tip over them.

Parents are unwittingly putting their children at risk of serious injury in the mistaken belief that steam inhalation will relieve the symptoms.

In the last five years alone almost 20 children have been admitted to Morriston Hospital’s Welsh centre for burns and plastic surgery after being scalded by very hot water.

One was so badly burnt a skin graft was required while another developed sepsis and was critically ill in intensive care – though thankfully the patient made a full recovery.

Now, as a result of the concerns raised by experts at the hospital, GPs and practice nurses are to be given new guidelines so steam inhalation is no longer recommended.

It follows research carried out by consultant plastic surgeons Sarah Hemington-Gorse and Dai Nguyen and consultant paediatrician Chris Bidder, who were concerned at the number of children being seen with steam inhalation-related injuries.

Dai said: “Sitting in a steamy room, such as the bathroom with the shower running, will provide some short-term symptom relief.

“But it doesn’t shorten the duration of the cold and makes no long-term difference. There is no gain but there is potential harm.

“Having bowls of hot water around children is not advisable. They are unaware of the dangers and get worse burns than adults if the same temperature water hits them because their skin is thinner.

“Parents were present and supervising the steam inhalation in all the cases we looked at. But it can happen so quickly. You cannot catch a bowl of hot water once it starts tipping over.”

Porthcawl parents Rachel and Gavin Denley-Ansen had to take son Finley, aged eight, to their GP surgery in Porthcawl.

Rachel said: “We thought he had hay fever. The nurses in the surgery thought it was a cold and suggested we used steam.

“We had a bowl of water which we wasn’t boiling but was obviously hot, and placed a towel over Finley’s head.

“His father and I were either side of him. I said, ‘When you need to move, let me know’. And as I said that, Finley just moved his head and pulled the water all over his legs.”

Finley, a pupil at West Park Primary School, said: “It really hurt. When I got off the chair I was in shock.

“I didn’t know what to do so my dad told me to go into the shower and then they were just putting cold water over me.”

Finley was taken by ambulance to Morriston where he was found to have suffered 15-20 per cent burns to his lower abdomen, groin and legs.

This required trips to theatre and a stay in intensive care before he was moved to the children’s ward. However, after going home Finley became very ill with sepsis and was rushed to intensive care again.

Fortunately he has since made a full recovery, with a small scar the only physical reminder of his ordeal.

Rachel said: “My advice to parents would be never to use steam inhalation. I just wouldn’t ever put hot water by the children again and I wouldn’t recommend anybody else does it.”

Public-spirited Filco staff help to raise £11,000 for cancer charity

STAFF, colleagues and shoppers at FILCO Supermarkets spent the year fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Support, raising over £11,000 from store collections and payroll giving to taking on the Cardiff Half Marathon, they pulled together to raise vital funds.

“Each day in Wales, 50 people will receive the devastating news that they have cancer and Macmillan is working each day towards being there for every person facing that diagnosis to ensure that no one faces cancer alone,” said Amy White, fundraising manager for Macmillan Cancer Support, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly.

“The fantastic fundraising by FILCO staff and customers is invaluable to Macmillan Cancer Support. Without them, and other fundraisers, we simply could not provide the support and services we do to people affected by cancer.

“I want to say a big thank you to FILCO from everyone at Macmillan Cancer Support and on behalf of everyone we support each year.

“No-one should have to face cancer alone. The support from our fundraisers, and the team at FILCO, helps us be there for people and their family when they need us most.

Jeanne Davies, administration manager, FILCO Supermarkets said: “We are very pleased to have helped such a worthy cause as Macmillan and know that every £pound raised by the FILCO team will be put to good use.”

For information or support relating to cancer, call Macmillan’s Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 (8am to 8pm Monday to Friday); or visit www.macmillan.org.uk

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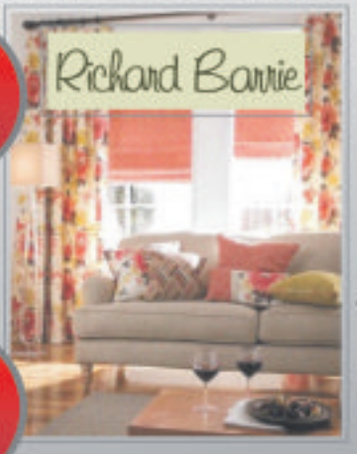

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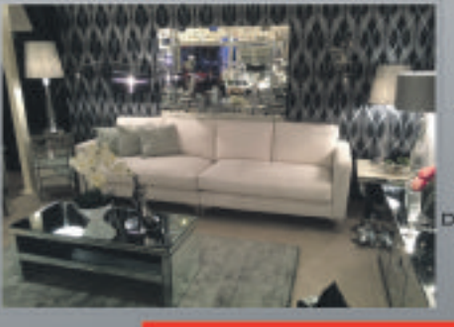

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News in and out of class at Barry Comprehensive

Conor, Callum and Tyler with their Kindle readers.

STUDENTS and their families joined staff and governors for Barry Comprehensive School's annual Christmas carol service at St Mary's Church, Holton Road.

The service combined songs and music performed to the music department's high standard, along with readings delivered by students. The large congregation joined in enthusiastically with the traditional and modern hymns.

We would like to thank everyone who made this very enjoyable festive celebration possible.

In It To Win It Christmas 2015

CHRISTMAS came early for some lucky boys in years 7, 8 and 9. The now famous Barry Comprehensive School 'In it to win it' draw took place on the last day of term for the expectant students. Raffle tickets were accumulated since September, with tickets being awarded for effort in class, excellent behaviour and high attendance.

Three lucky pupils gained the star prizes of Amazon tablets, with others winning selection boxes and other assorted goodies. The 'In it to win it' draw was introduced to promote high standards throughout KS3 and the next draw will take place on the last day before Easter.

Of course, only boys on Santa's good list could obtain the tickets! The more tickets, the more chance you have of taking away a prize. So we will pass the baton to the Easter bunny, with all boys having a chance to win next term. Remember if they're in, they can win!

Children's gifts

EVERY year, students and staff at Barry Comprehensive collect gifts to take to the children's hospital in Cardiff.

The school has been a long-standing supporter of LATCH, delivering presents to the oncology clinic at Llandough Hospital for many years, and is now continuing the tradition at University of Wales Hospital.

Edward and Owain delivered Christmas presents to the Children's Hospital.

Senior choir 'O Holy Night'.

ADVERTISEMENT

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Phil a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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CHALLENGE, YES, BUT OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR THE VALE IN 2016...

VIEW FROM THE VALE

by Coun **NEIL MOORE**
Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

I WRITE my final column of 2015 on the cusp of a New Year, and one that will be very important for the future of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has just published its 'Draft Corporate Plan', which sets out our vision for the next four years, along with our medium term financial plan.

Residents can find and comment on the draft corporate plan, along with our budget proposals for next year, via our website, but just to be clear, neither document will be finalised until Vale residents have had their say and a decision is taken by the full council meeting sometime in the first quarter of 2016.

It is now clearer than ever that the Vale Council will be a very different organisation in four years' time from what it is today.

We estimate that the council will have to save at least £18m over the next two years, and could well have to find the same amount in the two years that follow.

It will inevitably have a reduced workforce and many of our services will be delivered in very different ways.

I do not, however, see a totally bleak picture when I look ahead to 2016 and the years beyond. We must see it as an opportunity for the council to radically change the way in which it works and take the opportunity to collaborate with others and look at alternative ways of providing an even higher quality of service to Vale residents.

Our renewed 'corporate vision' is a Vale of Glamorgan which is defined by 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' as set out in the draft corporate plan and is reflected in our budget proposals for next year and beyond.

The financial barriers being placed in front of us by central Government are unprecedented, but there are 127,000 people who live in the Vale, all of whom rely to some extent on our services.

I believe that they should expect the Council to deliver the highest level of service possible within the resources at its disposal and that is what we aim to do. Most importantly, I believe that the council that I lead is more than capable of doing just that. This belief is not based on blind optimism, but is based on the evidence that I see every day in the work undertaken by the incredibly hard working staff. The last 12 months have seen a series of fantastic achievements that demonstrate exactly what a special place the Vale is in which to live, work, appreciate and enjoy.

Schools in the Vale achieved their best ever exam grades this year. Llantwit Major Comprehensive School's GCSE results were the pick of the bunch with a 14% improvement on 2014's results, along with Barry Comprehensive and Stanwell Comprehensive who also obtained their best ever grades.

And it wasn't just the pupils celebrating in Penarth. The Vale of Glamorgan team of officers, who were behind the Penarth Learning Community project, scooped no fewer than seven awards in the first year since its opening. The same team are now constructing a new learning community for Llantwit Major, so we may not have to wait too long to see more accolades for their work.

Elsewhere in the Vale, 2015 saw a long running regeneration project come to fruition. The transformed Barry Island pulled in TV cameras, as well as record crowds this summer, as people flocked to stroll along the rejuvenated promenade, enjoy the new features and manicured backdrops, and make their trips to the seaside even more special by hiring the new beach huts.

This project has also been recognised as one of UK's best examples of regeneration. I have no doubt that this, plus the events programme that saw the resort shortlisted for a national tourism award, were big factors in attracting the potential development that could soon commence on Nell's Point, although we still have our fingers crossed!

The scale and quality of what has been proposed for the former Butlin's site is clear evidence that the resort is back on top, and along with the rejuvenated fun fair site, gives confidence that an all year round tourism and business destination is viable at Barry Island.

This regeneration on the Island, and the surrounding development of the Waterfront are examples of how much can be achieved when organisations across the public and private sectors work together effectively. Partnership working will be the means by which we overcome the challenges that we face in the coming years and the Vale Council is fast becoming one of the best local authorities in Wales in this regard.

Our social services team was commended by the Chief Inspector for Social Services in Wales in 2015. One of the secrets to their success was working effectively with others in the care sector. Their most notable achievement within integrating health and social care realised radical reductions in waiting times, has drawn plaudits from Government Ministers, and has doubtless improved many lives. The potential to build on this success bodes well for the future.

Many of you may be reading this after a brisk stroll, working off a turkey sandwich or two. If so, you may also have just visited one of the parks that have this year been applauded for their cleanliness. I am very proud to say that the Vale Council ends 2015 with more 'green flag' parks than ever before.

This is yet another example of how more can be done with less and of how we can find alternative ways to improve what we do while making the required savings.

I could continue to list the number of ways in which the council has this year worked harder than ever to support the communities that we all want to see thrive, but the truth is that I could write all day and would still end up missing something out.

What is important, and what these examples make clear, is that the council has an excellent track record of delivering top quality services on a limited budget. Indeed, the council was this year ranked as the top performing local authority in Wales despite receiving one of the lowest levels of funding for each of our residents.

I have represented Cadoc ward as a local councillor since 1988 and can honestly say that the financial pressures that we are now under have made 2015 one of the most challenging years I have ever known.

However, looking back on all of the progress that has been achieved and the obstacles that have been overcome, I can also say that it has been one of the most rewarding.

As we enter 2016, I am proud to live in a Vale of Glamorgan that is thriving, welcoming, and characterised by a sense of community that is as strong as ever.

This is not down to politicians like me, but to you, the residents of the Vale of Glamorgan, many of whom also form our workforce, who make it a reality. I know we can continue to work together to build an ever better future for the Vale of Glamorgan.

I wish you all a peaceful and happy new year.
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

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The Candylion may be bonkers – but it's bonkers in a good way!

Gruff Rhys, Matthew Bulgo and Dyfrig Morris.

ABOVE: Remy Beasley (right) with Dyfan Dwyfor. Photos by Farrows Creative/National Thatre Wales.

JUST how do you describe National Theatre Wales' family Christmas show, *The Insatiable, Inflatable Candylion*?

Officially, it's a theatre gig, with the musicians assembled by Gruff Rhys constantly on stage, and the action taking place around and alongside them.

You could call it an allegory, with a message about the pernicious effect of inequality on society, and on how important it is to share things fairly.

My guest called it "bonkers" - but she meant it in a good way.

National Theatre Wales prides itself on doing things differently, and the production team have transformed the indoor cricket school at the Swalec Stadium into a surprisingly intimate venue.

The audience is in the middle, the majority standing, with the band and cast on a raised stage running all the way round them. The children are encouraged to gravitate to the front, and from where I stood, they seemed to me to be following things closely – always a good sign.

There is plenty to keep their attention, because Gruff Rhys is a good old-fashioned tunesmith. You could imagine him in the old days of Tin Pan Alley, churning out hit tunes for a series of lyricists.

The actors have plenty to do, and they grab the kids' attention in a series of eccentric roles, and the young audience will learn plenty about stagecraft from the cast. There's a great scene featuring Matthew Bulgo, playing Caruin (half carnation and half penguin - don't ask me to explain, please).

He sets off on a long journey through water, ice and burning desert, with two actors holding a backdrop and producing a series of props to illustrate his trek. Funny enough, I think, to make all ages laugh.

What's the show all about? Well, Tim Price, who has some serious credits for writing TV shows such as *Y Pris* and *Caerdydd*, has been drafted in to work on the plot, but I think in reality he was there to write those knowing lines that go over the children's heads but get a smile from the grown-ups.

For instance, Remy Beasley, who is excellent in the title role, becomes a megalomaniac dictator at one stage. She appears on the balcony above the audience, Eva Peron style, declaring "There is no Alternative". Bit of politics there, as Ben Elton used to say.

To return to the question of how do you describe *Candylion*, I think the best parallel might be The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*. That was a story with a plot that no one remembers, but with goodies and baddies, and all driven along by excellent tunes.

Is it in competition with the pantos? I don't think so, because it does have the USP of a great live band who are smart enough to do more than just play – they contribute to the show in many areas, and Gruff Rhys himself has a good line in dry, understated humour. He delivers a lot of those lines intended for the grown-ups.

A fun night, with plenty to make you smile and music to make you tap your feet.

The show runs until January 2 at the Swalec Stadium, Sophia Gardens, and the box office is 02920 371 689.

PHILIP IRWIN

JOY OF CHRISTMAS AT SCHOOL CONCERT

CAN I pinch an inch or two of The GEM to say 'Diolch yn fawr' to Mrs Andrew and all the foundation phase staff and children of Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc.

I recently had the delight of watching the foundation phase Christmas concert and it was an absolute delight.

The level of performing skills was very high indeed (and that is a professional opinion, in my previous life I was head of drama in a Swansea comprehensive school).

I was particularly impressed with the children's speech skills – not a microphone in sight but the audience heard every word.

A beautiful retelling of the Bible story of the Nativity that was full of the joy of Christmas.

Diolch yn Fawr to all who contributed.

David Alexander (Amelie's Bampi).

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HOWARD'S SEA VOYAGE HAS SPECTACLE BUT LACKS THE EMOTIONAL PUNCH...

by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

WHEN Chris Hemsworth isn't wielding his hammer as part of the Marvel universe, he's showing a pretty impressive ability to pick good projects.

Showing up in the likes of *The Cabin In The Woods, Rush* and *Vacation*, Hemsworth has shown a versatility that is pretty unexpected, and re-teams with his *Rush* director Ron Howard on *In The Heart of the Sea*.

Hemsworth plays Owen, first mate to the whaling ship *The Essex*. When the boat and its crew (numbering among them Tom Holland, Cillian Murphy and Benjamin Walker) are attacked by a mammoth whale, the men are left shipwrecked and struggling to survive; pushed to their limits, will they be able to live long enough to return home...

'Man versus Nature' is a story as old as time, especially when it comes to the big screen. While there have been adaptations of 'Moby Dick', the real events that inspired that tale has never been brought to bear (let alone made into a film).

While it could have been easier for Ron Howard to simply make a 21st century retelling of Herman Melville's story, going for the (supposed) fact behind the fiction arguably makes for a more compelling, richer story – although in reality, what it does is play out as Moby Dick with a degree more savagery and with the added ingredients of human ego battling out among the wild seas.

Using the framing narrative of Melville (played by Ben Whishaw) talking to one of the now-older survivors of the ordeal that befell the *Essex* ship (embodied alongside Whishaw, in the main thrust of the story Tom Holland), we are taken into a world of whale oil trading, where fortunes are being made and competition is fierce.

It's easy to see this early part of the film play as comment on the society of today, where big business takes the driving seat and pushes the limits of behaviour, especially when it comes to plundering the natural world and those in it, and to be fair this is where Howard's film shows that it has intent on being more than just a creature feature.

Sadly, this part of the film plays slowly and as we go out to sea, awaiting the arrival of the big whale, the film tends to tinker along, dripping with dialogue heavily seasoned with sea salt and characterisation that feels familiar.

It's when we get into the heart of the sea that the film finally clicks into gear, firstly through a well-executed sequence that sees the crew tested by conditions, and then tested by the beast that haunts the boat.

Howard's direction picks up the pace and the film transforms into a blockbuster (the effects are well-realised) and then a fight for survival as the shipwrecked men battle to stay alive.

It's these moments that give the crew the best chance of getting deeper into the material – Chris Hemsworth is at home playing alpha-male, leader-of-men-types, and this is exactly what he is here; while his sharp interactions with the captain of the ship he is essentially babysitting, played by Benjamin Walker, aren't given anywhere near enough time to grow, the relationship bubbling over rather than boiling.

And that is the film's main, and overwhelming, bugbear – while it draws you in, you never get deeply enough into the characters to ever feel anything for them. You're watching them rather than feeling anything for them, and even when they are at the end of their sanity, the connection never really sparks.

It's a film that looks great, has its moments, and labours over the point of man and his hubris being the cause of all that goes wrong on this trip (rammed home with no little subtlety by slow close-ups of some characters post-whale kill) but it never truly engages you. You'll take a trip to the *Heart of the Sea* – but while Ron Howard draws you in physically, you're never there emotionally.

VERDICT – Man struggles to survive against nature; a story heard before, and one *In The Heart Of The Sea* doesn't really offer anything new on. It's a big, epic looking film, but it doesn't grab your heart, and it's that inability to create a connection that makes it a by-the-numbers offering. Average.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Jaws* (1975), *The Perfect Storm* (2000)

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D910.

● **£2,000:** 980188.

● **The rollover, which was £3,500, was not won.**

● **£10:** 898313; 554229; 473063; 941388; 230807; 968581; 838844; 496537; 850683; 179825; 338615; 402874; 934996; 592925; 112623; 680511; 317415; 396064; 475.

● **£5:** 150038; 718780; 770359; 959283; 278826; 793814; 255057; 730462; 103434; 686710; 443168; 227044; 209804; 748755; 470495; 189265; 431646; 795961; 473905; 708970; 709965; 178803; 256462; 368767; 397076; 299110; 907070; 207775; 483200; 619361; 586472; 682230; 496019; 341868; 862794; 231961; 417729; 301095; 680889; 490158; 152310; 872669; 488224; 597011; 262586; 353960; 734470; 256354; 216578; 905347; 690877; 564818; 828353; 307668; 164994; 132754; 1344; 476; 1383.

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D911.

● **£2,000:** 1187.

● **The rollover, which now stands at £4,000 was not won this week.**

● **£10:** 965110; 980195; 664798; 851886; 272335; 252411; 244740; 405733; 508229; 517469; 754824; 172350; 216192; 722449; 799351; 289162; 829576; 317214; 379796; 450678; 424754; 737039; 435156; 437502; 792634; 814517; 708650; 863105; 418065; 396564; 397076; 569932; 191710; 815366; 855303; 327294; 717366; 678739; 112550; 595287; 898219; 997006; 904327; 639553; 495927; 245497; 387227; 773660; 524966; 710625; 960899; 703852; 642027; 472761; 955435; 441960; 121037; 217112; 147270; 625690; 412754; 898285; 735739; 830193; 134198; 281136; 858923; 314097; 413970; 311405; 452797; 645899; 405023; 217549; 793100; 188485; 389816; 822664; 1515.

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Poppy collection hits a new high in Cowbridge

THE organisers of Cowbridge's Poppy Appeal were delighted to learn just before Christmas that funds raised this year had jumped by 20 per cent!

The money collected from appeal boxes in shops, schools, banks, pubs etc. and from the street collection points has hit a high point of £13,489.

David Howell, Cowbridge Poppy Appeal organiser, said: "I must say thank so many people for this fantastic collection.

"Thanks go to the public of Cowbridge and the Vale for their wonderful generosity and support, the organisations and businesses who accepted collection boxes and collected on our behalf – and the volunteers who manned collection points, sometimes in the most dreadful weather, and who actually collected over 60 per cent of the total.

"I must also say a very big thank you to the staff of Lloyds Bank, Cowbridge, who counted the donations for us. Our good fortune meant a lot of extra work for them, for which I am very grateful."

He added "I would also express my gratitude to Andrew Davies, the town clerk at Cowbridge Town Council for organising the Remembrance Day parade; Russ Barnett, the parade marshall, for running the day so well; those who purchased wreaths to commemorate the occasion; all the groups that took part; and the organisations and people who supported the successful event on the day.

"These donations, when added to additional income from other sources, means that we have already exceeded last year's record figure and are set to exceed £17,000 for 2015.

"I believe this clearly demonstrates the support by the public for our servicemen and servicewomen and the donations will be put to very good use.

"Thank you once again to everyone concerned."

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Gladstone pupils bring joy to local residents

The infants school choir, staff, Jane Hutt AM and Eric Hands, chair of residents' committee.

The nursery children put on a lovely play.

Junior school choir, staff, Jane Hutt and Eric Hands.

RESIDENTS of Golau Caredig extra care housing scheme in Barry had an early festive treat recently when over 100 children from Gladstone Road Primary School visited to stage a Christmas concert.

Pupils from the nursery school delighted the audience with a song-filled Christmas play which was followed by a selection of songs and carols from the infant and junior school choirs.

The visit to the scheme signals the start of what it is hoped will be a very meaningful relationship between the school and residents.

Headteacher Caroline Newman explained: "We were so pleased to be able to bring the children along to perform and they can't wait to come back in the New Year to meet the residents' committee. Our plan is to develop regular events throughout the year to give everyone young and old, the opportunity to share stories and experiences, have fun and learn from each other."

Eric Hands (81) chair of the residents' committee, said: "The concert was absolutely brilliant and the children did a great job in entertaining us. Social involvement can get harder as you get older or if you have health issues but events like these help everyone feel part of the local community.

"They are especially nice for those who don't have family or friends close by or who may not be able to get out and about. We were also pleased that Jane Hutt our local AM was able to join us."

The committee formed in July and is going from strength to strength. They were very grateful to secure a grant from Age Cymru and have been very busy arranging social activities.

Eric explained: "The school concert was just one part of our Christmas extravaganza! Next we welcome Barry Brass Band to Golau, we've organised a coach trip to see the Christmas lights in Cardiff, Barry and Penarth and we're also going to the pantomime."

Golau Caredig is the Vale of Glamorgan's first extra care scheme. Located in the centre of Barry, the iconic glass-fronted building provides much-needed affordable independent living accommodation for people over 55 in the form of 42 purpose-built one and two-bedroom flats. Individual care and support is provided via an in-house domiciliary care and tenant support service.

Tenants have access to a comprehensive range of facilities including a restaurant, hairdressers, laundrette, communal lounge and IT suite, plus a full programme of regular activities to help them stay active and healthy.

The scheme, built in partnership by Hafod Care Association and the Vale of Glamorgan Council, opened in October 2014.

To find out more about Hafod Care visit www.hafod.org.uk

Jan Read with Treacle, the Text Santa pup.

Puppy walker Jan so proud of young Treacle!

GUIDE dog puppy Treacle is only seven months old, but she's already a celebrity!

The pure black Labrador was one of a handful of pups to be named by the viewers of ITV's charity appeal, Text Santa. Other festive choices were Twiglet, Waffle, Hollie, Cocoa and Ice.

Treacle is undergoing her first year of training in Tre-dodridge with puppy walker Jan Read: "She is very bright and picks up instructions quickly. We have travelled by train and bus, and been shopping in B&Q and Marks & Spencer. We were among All Blacks fans in Cardiff on match day and she coped really well.

"She goes to puppy class in Llangan and is so laid back for her age. She executes all the moves, and looks straight into your eyes as if to ask what to do next."

Jan became a puppy walker for Guide Dogs after the death of a beloved pet. She said: "We've always had retrievers and when the latest, Phoebe, passed away, I decided I didn't want to lose another dog and go through that upset again.

"I have had three lovely Guide Dog puppies, one after the other, each beginning with 'T'. Tabitha, a yellow labrador, is qualified and working as a guide dog in Northamptonshire. I knew from day one that she would make the grade.

"Tweedie, a German Shepherd, is in advanced training in Cardiff and now I have Treacle, who is a real character. None of the puppies has been destructive. They don't have time to get bored."

She said people often ask her how she copes when the puppy leaves for advanced training. "I was upset on the day Tabitha went, but when I visited her at the training school a few months later, I could see her allegiance had moved on," she said. "She gave me lots of hugs and kisses, but all the time she was looking out for her trainer. It was a form of positive closure."

Meanwhile, Jan has found a novel way of raising money for Guide Dogs: "My husband Simon and I went over to Hensol golf course and collected balls that had been lost on the course," she said. "We sold about 200 to different people and gave the £20 proceeds to Guide Dogs. The worst bit was washing each one with a nail brush!"

To raise money for Guide Dogs, or to find out more about becoming a puppy walker, ring Steve Kersley on 07785 907728.

Club benefits from Christmas donations appeal

LOCAL children's swimming club Barry Beavers were chosen to receive a donation of 50 Christmas gifts this year, as part of the St David's Cardiff Toy Appeal.

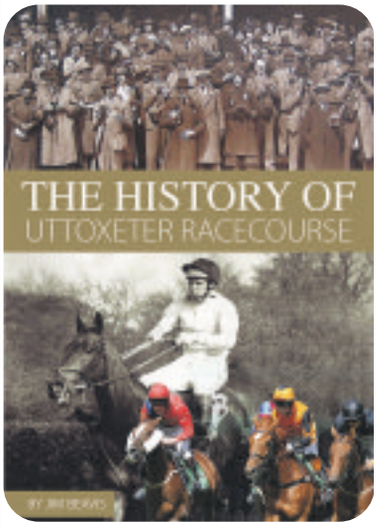
In December, shoppers were invited to buy an extra Christmas gift for a child in need, and drop it off at the St David's Donation Station. A team of helpers made sure all gifts were delivered safely in time for Christmas. The generosity of Welsh shoppers saw donations pass 4,000, the original target for the appeal, to a total of over 5,200.

Barry Beavers is open to children of all abilities, and provides a fun and friendly environment for children to learn to swim confidently.

Steven Madeley, general manager for St David's, said: "We are so grateful to our generous customers who have not only helped us hit our ambitious target, but surpass it."

ON AND OFF THE TURF WITH BRIAN LEE

Dick Rees – loved the sauce, but a great jockey



RACECOURSE historian Jim Beavis, who has written books on Bath, Fontwell and Brighton racecourses, has now added another book to his growing list.

It is The History Of Uttoxeter Racecourse, published by the author at £15.45 (including postage & packing) and can be obtained by writing to him at 70 Aylesford Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 3SD or by e-mailing him at jimbeavis@hotmail.com.

Jim, who is also researching a book about Windsor racecourse, can claim to have visited every racecourse in the country and quite a few abroad too! He enjoys visiting Fontwell and Brighton because he knows he is bound to come across some friendly faces.

The people he says he admires most in horse racing are the stable staff who he says: "Do all the dirty work, come rain or shine, working long hours for not much money."

Stories about the many great trainers and riders can be found in The History Of Uttoxeter Racecourse – characters such as Terry Biddlecombe, Jenny Pitman, Stan Mellor, who married a Vale girl, David and Martin Pipe, Richard Dunwoody and Welsh riders Carl Llewellyn and Hywel Davies and, of course, some of the not so famous.

However, perhaps the most famous celebrity to visit the course was Doctor Samuel Johnson (1709-84), writer, poet, critic and compiler of the first English dictionary which set a standard unsurpassed for 150 years.

Meanwhile, in Jim's The History of Fontwell Racecourse, he tells the tale of the famed Welsh steeplechase jockey Dick (Fred) Rees: "The large holiday crowd on June 8, 1927 saw Dick Rees fall at the last from *Ferdia*. The horse broke its neck and the jockey had a compound fracture of the right knee.

"Although it was not made public at the time, Dick had been drinking. He had been severely reprimanded by the stewards of the National Hunt Committee for having been found drunk by the Hexham stewards when riding there.

"He was regarded as the best jump jockey between the wars, winning the Grand National on *Shaun Spadah* in 1921 when everything else fell, the Cheltenham Gold Cup three times, and becoming champion jockey five times in eight years. His score of 108 winners in 1924 was a record for 28 years. He had good hands, presented his horses at the obstacles supremely well, and was strong and stylish."

In Jim's The History Of Bath Racecourse, his version of the *Francasal* ringer scandal of 1953, (in which Cardiff bookmaker Gomer Charles was involved) is of great interest. Charles was shot dead outside his Park Place house in Cardiff in 1966 and I recall seeing two policemen outside the house when walking home in the early hours of the morning after my stint on the Western Mail.

All of Jim's books are well illustrated and I hope he can be persuaded to compile a follow-up to Pat Lucas's excellent Fifty Years of Racing at Chepstow, which was published by H G Walters, Tenby, in 1976.

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Youth project's Christmas feast!

THE Cadoxton Youth Project hosted a Christmas meal event as a result of successful funding provided by Dish Out Dosh (Glamorgan Voluntary Services).

The Christmas meal took place at Cadoxton Methodist Church on Tuesday, December 15. Over 85 people attended and were treated to a turkey or pork meal with all the trimmings.

Vale AM Jane Hutt attended and presented cheques as a result of fundraising to Marie Curie, Ty Hafan and Barry Beavers Club.

Rita Limbrick, the organiser of the event said: "It was great to see the children enjoying themselves, making and decorating Christmas cards and having fun with local partners such as Barry Communities First, the Vale Youth Service and the Big Learning Company."

There were several prizes given out to children who made Christmas cards and they were able to choose prizes donated by the Toy Fair. Father Christmas also made an appearance and handed out selection boxes to the children and posed for photos.

The year 2016 promises to be a busy year for Cadoxton Youth Project, with the regeneration of Victoria Park and Main Street and the opportunity for children living in Cadoxton to get involved with the Cadoxton Community Project.

Pupils remember those less fortunate

ON December 18, Rhws Primary School held its seasonal Presents for Charity day, when the children donated gifts in their hundreds for those less fortunate than themselves.

These were delivered to the NSPCC at the annual Rhws Lifeguards Community carol concert in aid of the charity.

Children score festive triumph

THE children at Y Bont Faen Primary won warm plaudits for their Christmas concerts: the juniors performed the musical, *Simeon* and the foundation phase presented a play entitled *The Curious Sheep*.

The parents and teachers thought the children were brilliant: Miss Jones, the year-4 teacher, reported: "It was absolutely awesome, the children rose to the occasion and sang their hearts out."

It was a busy period for the Y Bont Faen Primary choir. They began the week singing outside Waitrose in Cowbridge and collected a magnificent £81, which they intended to donate to charity.

A year-4 member of the choir said: *"We sang each song twice and it was a bit nerve racking, because lots of people were looking at us"*.

The choir also sang at the Carols by Candlelight service at Ramoth church on Sunday and were also entertaining the residents of Long Meadow court.

Camera club signs off with a competition

BARRY Camera Club's monthly programme started on December 4 with a talk from Rob Mitchell, entitled 'The Cliché Trap'.

This explained how it is possible to avoid the mistake of simply regurgitating common themes in photography by taking a fresh view on even the most commonplace subjects in landscape, portrait and still life photography.

This requires some creative thinking on the part of the photographer which always presents a problem, particularly to those of us who are more schooled in the art of 'camera club photography' than photography itself.

On December 11 there was a presentation of members' images.

Due to the Christmas break, this month concluded early on the 18th with a competition night. The judge, Fred Davies, was very complimentary of the overall standard of the work, which had made it difficult to score.

He decided to make awards as follows:

Monochrome print: 20 points and first place went to Roy Carr for 'Steetley Pier; second place and 19 points, Glenn Porter for 'On Target'; third place with 18 points, Glenn Porter for 'Morning Fishing'.

Colour print: First prize and 20 points went to Mike Lewis for 'Wild Field Poppy'; second place and 19 points went to Sarah Savage for 'Seen'; third Roy Carr, 17 points for 'Monknash Sunset'.

The **projected image** section was, as usual, the most contested: the winner with 20 points was Roy Carr with 'The Burren'; Tina Haydon took second place, 19 points with 'Tulip'; and in third place on 18 points was Glenn Porter, with 'Good Morning, Penarth'.

Barry Camera Club wishes all GEM readers the very best for the New Year! We resume on January 8.

The club meets every Friday from 7pm to 9.30pm at St Francis Millennium Centre, Porth-y-Castell, Barry Garden Suburb, Barry, CF62 6NX.

See more information on the website at: www.barrycameraclub.co.uk

Cookie-decorating, face painting... AND SANTA ARRIVED WITH GIFTS!

MORE than 300 children attended the Vale Council-led Barry Communities First Christmas party held in partnership with Legacy Leisure, Newydd Housing Association and the People Centre at Barry Leisure Centre on December 22.

A host of activities included cookie-decorating, holding animals with the Nearly Wild Show and face painting. Father Christmas also came to visit and handed a free selection box and photo to each child.

Hazel James – event co-ordinator said: "It was an amazing event and we're really happy that so many people came.

"All of the feedback has been positive and we're looking forward to doing it again next year."

Contact 01446 709432, or visit www.BarryCommunitiesFirst.org.

Cadoxton WI holds a festive get-together

ON December 21, Cadoxton (Barry) WI held its final meeting of the year.

It was a really festive night and one to remember. Five guests were welcomed.

The short agenda presented by the president reported that the coffee morning at the civic offices raised £400 for Marie Curie and £40 for Cadoxton School Nurture Project.

Several forthcoming trips were discussed. The Christmas Elf distributed the Secret Santa gifts and then members indulged in a delicious buffet.

The entertainment was provided by Graham Rush, who sang a medley of songs and the atmosphere was terrific.

He ended with a selection of carols, which brought the evening to a close. Raffles were donated by the committee and there were numerous winners.

It was a wonderful finish to a very successful year. The committee would like to thank all the people who came to our meetings, members and speakers.

Meetings are held every third Monday of the month, 7pm at Victoria Park Community Centre. Contact 01446 404891.

CW

Songs, dancing and a buffet!

HIGHLIGHT Park Women's Institute started the month with the craft group going to the Beech Tree for their Christmas meal, followed by the Tuesday afternoon meeting.

This went well, with a few quizzes, mince pies, s cakes and tea! At the evening meeting, members were entertained by Changing Scene theatre group with carols, songs and dances.

A buffet was later supplied by committee members.

Members meet in Highlight Park Community Hall on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm and on the third Tuesday at 7.15pm.

PW

Five stars for Cafe No 5!

CAFE No 5 in Barry's High Street has been awarded a five-star food hygiene rating by the Vale of Glamorgan – it is the third year running the cafe has achieved highest standard.

Steve Thomas of ValePlus, which runs the cafe, said: "This is a vindication of all the hard work by the staff all through the year."

The cafe offers training to adults with learning difficulties hoping to move into regular employment.

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Remember miners' fortnight in Porthcawl? Could 'Sausage Dog Day' take its place?

The were plenty of puzzled Porthcawlians around Coney Beach last weekend, as 'sausage dog' owners from far and wide descended on the town.

It all started on Facebook, and organisers said they were amazed at the response.

Similar events are likely in the future.

Images by **ANDY WICKS**
Telephone 07855 374478

Jenner Park children put on a fine Christmas show

AFTER a few weeks of practicing and learning their lines for a Christmas show, Jenner Park pupils enjoyed performing for the parents and staff in Barry.

The school thanked parents for supporting the children by providing their costumes.

Local company has Christmas foodbank gifts for homeless

THE Jehu Group helped the homeless at Christmas with a special foodbank appeal to support the Llamau charity.

Llamau work with homeless young people and women providing 'quality support from dedicated support workers.'

Food collection boxes were placed on all Jehu Group sites across south and west Wales, as well as in the company head offices in Waterton Park, Bridgend.

Bernie Mark, Jehu corporate social responsibility and training co-ordinator, who helped organise the collection said: "The response from our staff and subcontractors on site has been brilliant.

"We were pleased to have been able to generate such a positive response to support this worthwhile charity, knowing that all of the donations will be going to support homeless people in south Wales."

Vale village enjoys its Christmas market!

PHOTOGRAPHS by **IAN DIXON**

IN the run-up to Christmas, the village of Peterston-super-Ely held its annual festive market in the church and community hall.

There was plenty of entertainment – with choirs singing carols, handbell ringers, a 'Santa' bran tub – and there was also a veritable feast on offer, washed down with copious amonts of coffee and mulled wine.

The general opinion of the residents who crowded into the village hall was that it was a magnificent start to the Christmas festivities!

'WE HOPE RECENT MEMORIAL SERVICE BROUGHT COMFORT AT A SPECIAL TIME OF THE YEAR'

ON November 21, we brought the community together to remember and share memories of loved ones at a special Christmas memorial service.

This year the service was held at St Mary's Church, Holton Road, Barry and was officiated by Father Ben Andrerws and Father Chris Seaton.

There was an amazing contribution from a local young lady Llinos Haf Jones, who provided an emotional interlude as she sang 'Fields Of Gold'.

We would like to thank everyone for their support and attendance; St Mary's church members for their help with the refreshments, especially the mince pies which have been very popular over the years at past services.

Also we wish to thank Llinos Haf Jones and her parents for their support over the years.

Finally our thanks to a good friend Dean Caldwell for his help with the provision of sound equipment for the service.

It was an overwhelming and emotional service, attended by around 250 people, and our way of giving something back to the community and letting people know that we don't forget them or their loved ones.

After the service, families and friends were invited to add their messages to the Memorial Tree which was kept at St Mary's as part of its Christmas Tree Festival.

We hope that the service brought great comfort and send our best wishes, thoughts and prayers to everyone.

Lyndsay and Nicola Ellis
www.valefuneralservice.co.uk

Messages remembering loved ones decorated the memorial tree.

Public can help shape iconic designs on Heritage Coast

VALE residents are being invited to help shape the designs for four iconic new sculptures along the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

These will mark key entrance points to the area, as part of an ongoing initiative to raise the profile of the destination to visitors and residents alike. While their exact locations are yet to be finalised, it's likely they'll be situated at roadsides in Ogmore, St Brides Major, Llantwit Major and St Athan.

Artist Howard Bowcott, a specialist in large-scale public artworks, has been commissioned by Creative Rural Communities to create the sculptures. Initial concept designs show large fin or sail-like shapes made from layers of locally-sourced stone that will represent the cliff strata of our coastline.

Local residents can help shape the designs by attending one of two public consultations, where they can meet the artist, view the initial designs and offer their thoughts on what makes the Glamorgan Heritage Coast special. Howard will also be hosting consultations with local school pupils.

The public consultations will be held on January 18, 6pm – 8pm at St Bridget's Church Hall in St Brides Major; and January 19, 10.30am – 12.30pm at Llantwit Major Town Hall.

Coun Lis Burnett, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "We hope that local residents will enjoy being part of the design process and will have a real sense of pride as the sculptures are unveiled later in 2016. The Glamorgan Heritage Coast is a great asset in the Vale of Glamorgan and these features will really highlight the area as something special."

Volunteers break for festive lunch!

VOLUNTEERS who help maintain Porthkerry Country Park have given the site its final pruning of 2015.

A Vale Council spokesman reportee: "After a morning of cutting, lopping and burning last week the 'practical conservation' volunteers sat down for a hard earned Christmas lunch. The group who help keep much of the park's greenery healthy were joined in their festive celebrations by some of the other groups who help make the park such a popular attraction."

Also in attendance were the Porthkerry Wildlife Group, who help monitor and survey the wildlife of the park and gardening volunteers creating a wildlife - riendly garden around Nightingale Cottage.

Mel Stewart, site ranger at Porthkerry Country Park, said: "We are so lucky to have a fantastic group of volunteers who help make a huge difference to the park. Having everyone together highlights just how many people give up their own time to maintain a site that is enjoyed by so many.

"We really appreciate their help and hard work and it's great to be able to thank them with a little celebration – even if the sausage rolls were a bit burnt!"

Anyone interested in volunteering at Porthkerry, or any of the other countryside sites around the Vale should contact the ranger service on 01446 733589 or email countrysidevolunteers@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk<mailto:countrysidevolunteers@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

FREE TAX HELP

TAX Help For Older People (TOP) will hold a professional advice surgery to older people on a restricted income at Roz Couzens' Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial House, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major CF61 1RB on Monday, January 4, from 10am to midday.

No appointment is necessary. The TOP helpline can be reached on 0845 601 3321, or 01308 488066; home visits can also be arranged.

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Family Notices

BUNN
Julie Alison (née Cornwell)

Suddenly on 16 December, Julie Alison (Née Cornwell) of Palmerston Road, Barry. Dearly loved wife of John. Sister of Janet and aunty to Jeffrey and Daniel.

Julie will be sadly missed by all of her family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry until the funeral on Thursday, 7 January. Service in the chapel at 10am, afterwards cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road East, Barry.

Family flowers only, if desired donations may be handed to the funeral director after the funeral for Dogs Trust.

EASTERBROOK
Colin

Peacefully on December 26, Colin, most dearly loved husband, father and grandfather.

Funeral service at St John the Baptist Church Llanblethian, on Friday, January 8, 2016 at 11.30am, followed by interment. No flowers by request.

HOCKING
Charles Stanley *(Charlie)*

Peacefully after a long illness at UHW Cardiff on December 9, Charlie, aged 85 years.

Beloved husband of the late Serena, much loved dad of Clive and daughter-in-law Tracey, adored grandad to Rhys and Sian, great granddad to Chelsea, Georgia and Jack.

Charlie will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son until the funeral service in the chapel of rest on Friday, January 8 at 2pm, followed by Committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations in lieu if so desired for The Alzheimer's Society c/o the funeral director.

WILLIAMS
Robin

(Of Cowbridge and of the South Wales Echo)

Peacefully in his sleep at the Princess of Wales hospital. Dearly loved husband of Brenda. Dad to twin sons Paul and Julian, daughter-in-law Shelly and fiancé Julie. Bampi to Jess, Abi, Zoe, and partners Tom, Robert and Stephen. Great bampi Rob to Jayden, Elijah and Imogen.

Will be truly missed for his outrageous fun and laughter.

Funeral service at Barry Crematorium on Thursday, January 7, 2016 at 2pm. Bright colours please.

Family flowers only, donations in lieu may be sent to Cardiology Department, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.

HARRHY
Richard David

Very suddenly on 14 December, Richard of Llantwit Major. Cherished husband of Susan and loving father of Matthew and James. Respected father-in-law of Rebekah and Sarah, and a much loved grandfather.

Resting at W.A.Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Tuesday, 5 January 2016 in St Illtud's Church at 2pm, followed by interment at Boverton Cemetery.

Family flowers only but donations may be made to CAVRA c/o the funeral home (cheques only please).

TAYLOR
Gerald

After a short illness bravely borne, Gerald of Llantwit Major and formerly of Llandow. Treasured husband of Vivienne and a dearly loved father of Martin, Lee and Nick and a much loved grandfather and greatgrandfather.

He will be sadly missed by all.

Resting at W.A.Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Monday, 4 January 2016 in Coychurch Crematorium at 2.45pm. Family flowers only but donations may be made to Cancer Research UK Cymru c/o the funeral home (cheques only please).

AUSTIN
Enice Mair

Passed away peacefully at the Princess of Wales Hospital on December 21, aged 83 years. Beloved wife of Bill. A very loving mother of Alun, Leighton, Philip and Meryl. A proud nanny to her six grandchildren and also great nanny to her seven great grandchildren. Loving sister of Margaret and the late Eirlys. Mair will be sadly missed by all of her family and friends.

Funeral service at Coychurch Crematorium on Friday, January 8, 2016 at 2.45pm. Strictly no flowers. Donations in lieu may be given to MND (Motor Neurone Disease Association) PO Box 246, Northampton, NN1 2PR or Cancer Research Wales, Velindre Hospital, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 2TL. A special thanks to the staff of Ward 4 and AMU, Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend.

WATKINS
Ronald

Peacefully at Holme Tower on 19 December, Ron, aged 89 years. Beloved husband of the late Gwyneth, much loved dad of Stephen and Donna, adored gramps and pappy to Richard, Katherine, Nataly and Grant, great grampy to Megan.

Ron will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son until the funeral service in the chapel of rest on Tuesday, 5 January 2016 at 10am, followed by committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations in lieu if so desired for Marie Curie Hospice, Penarth c/o the funeral director.

CHURCHILL
Lillian May (née Bobbett)

Suddenly passed away on December 20 in Princess of Wales Hospital, Lillian of St. Athan. A much loved mother, grandmother and great grandmother, who will be sadly missed.

Resting at W.A.Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Monday, 4 January 2016 in St. Tathan Church at 10.45am, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Memorial Park Crematorium at 12 noon. Family flowers only but donations may be made to British Heart Foundation c/o the funeral home (cheques only please).

DAVID
Frances Joan (Frankie) (Née Twigg)

Peacefully on December 22, after a long illness at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend. Frankie of Mallory Close, St. Athan. Dearly loved mother of Fabian, Damian and their partners Angela and Katie. Cherished grandmother and great grandmother.

Frankie will be sadly missed by all of her family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry where flowers may be sent until the funeral on Thursday, January 7. Service in the chapel at 1.45pm, afterwards cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road East, Barry at 3pm.

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'Taffy' spins a tale for PoW patients (with help from his daughter Aster)

ONE of the UK's top storytellers has been spinning some seasonal tales for patients at Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend.

Taffy Thomas visited as part of ABMU's Arts in Health programme, and had musical support from his daughter, Aster.

Although he lives in Cumbria, Taffy has Welsh roots. He trained as a literature and drama teacher, and founded two theatre companies.

After a major stroke at the age of 36, he turned to storytelling as a self-imposed form of speech therapy, which turned into a new career.

Taffy was awarded the MBE in 2001 for services to storytelling and charity and became the first Laureate for Storytelling in 2009.

He delighted stroke patients on Ward 2 and youngsters on the children's ward – along with staff and families – with his storytelling skills.

ABMU arts in health coordinator Prue Thimbleby said: "Taffy was able to empathise with the stroke patients. He shared true stories from his own experience, as well as fictional stories chosen to give hope and encouragement through difficult times.

"On the children's ward, youngsters of all ages enjoyed his riddles, his wonderful storytelling coat and the Christmas stories.

"It proved a really good distraction for those waiting to go to theatre."

Literature Wales also arranged for Pont publishing to donate free books for all the children.

Catherine Roberts, head of governance and patient experience at Princess of Wales Hospital, described having a visit from the UK's first Laureate for Storytelling as a great honour.

She added: "I have spoken to the patients and their families about the visit. Some of the patients are receiving speech therapy and to hear about Taffy's experience and hear his stories was entertaining and inspiring.

"It was very generous and kind of him to give his time and the event was enjoyed by staff and patients."

Team take to the road

The Cowbridge roadshow.

DURING the run-up to Christmas, Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) took its services to Cowbridge, Llantwit Major and Saint Athan.

The aim was to meet as many local voluntary organisations as possible and for the local voluntary organisations to meet the GVS team.

The three events were well attended, with people braving the recent December storms to meet the GVS team to find out more about GVS services and how GVS can support local voluntary organisations.

Commenting on the events, Clive Curtis of GVS said: "We were pleased that so many local groups came to see us. In each venue, we were able to provide advice and information on a range of subjects, including funding, governance and volunteering.

"GVS experts were also on hand to answer questions or concerns on all aspects of volunteering and voluntary action. Building on the success of these events, we will be taking our services out again to various parts of the Vale of Glamorgan in the New Year.

"It is important that we make our organisation and our services as accessible as possible, by going into towns and villages the length and breadth of the Vale." **MS**

Strong season so far for the Llantwit Major under-15s

The team in action.

ABOVE and BELOW: Llantwit Major under-15s.

LLANTWIT MAJOR RFC finished 2015 with a storming 33-0 win at home to arch rivals Barry.

The 2015/16 has seen the team progress a step further. After a great start defeating Taylwain and Bargoed on the road the boys didn't perform and lost against Cowbridge.

Since the loss against Cowbridge the team has gone from strength to strength by recording nine wins to finish the year off in style.

Cefn Coed felt the wrath of the Cowbridge loss when Llantwit recorded a 64-0 win at home and dedicated their win to the late, great Lyn Dolman.

Next up Llantwit beat St Josephs, Pyle, Denbigh and Gilfach Goch just to name a few, but 2015 will be remembered for the victory at home to Penarth.

Having lost 42-0 the previous season to Penarth the result proves and shows how far the team has progressed. Penarth were four points ahead with one minute left to play when Iwan Robinson-Booth crossed to win the game.

Both in attack and defence the team has matured from boys to young men. They have worked hard in training and the new faces within the squad have given a refreshing uplift in both determination and confidence.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the squad and their parents for their continued support. I want to also thank my fellow coaches Kerry Williams and Alan McInnes for their time also.

We host Rhiwbina on January 10 and hope in 2016 the squad can continue its climb and keep the wins rolling and start adding more funds for our under-16s tour.

We have a few places available if anyone is interested in giving rugby a go. For more information, please contact coach Kris Pilcher 07557128861 or team manager Brian Henson 07976874741.

Squad: Dominic Henson, Brandon Hughes, Tyler chandler-Haines, Ieuan Harford, Cameron Sims, Rhys Roberts, Connor Treadgold, Dylan Carroll, Mason Richardson, Callum McInnes, Owen Hodge, Jos Harris, Dan Manfield, Gregor Harris, Liam Padmore, Ellis Harding, Liam Palmer, Owen Evans, Corley Doster, Dylan Chamberlain, Iwan Robinson-Booth, Luke Birnage (c), Dylan Holloway.

KP

Bridge Club takes on a festive air...

Rory, Eileen, Roger, Betty winning the Barrie Robinson Salver.

PORTHCAWL Bridge Club captured the festive spirit with a traditional 'Win A Turkey' night – a handicap pairs event for a turkey prize at Magness', the local butcher – won by Eileen and Jeff.

Following this, the club held its annual Christmas party for the Barrie Robinson Salver. This was run as 'mystery teams' – pairs didn't know their team-mates until the final board of the event.

After a splendid meal, with plenty of wine, Eileen, Rory, Betty and Roger took first prize and the salver.

Results:

Thursday, December 3: First, Keith Davison and Tony Haworth; handicap, Connie Dick and Janet Richards.

Saturday, December 5: First, Colin and Hazel Heard; second, Janet Richards and Trish Saunders.

Thursday, December 10: First, Terry Dolan and Roger Plant; handicap, Eileen Mahoney and Rory Gibbons.

Saturday, December 12: 'Win A Turkey Night' – winners (handicap), Eileen Mahoney and Jeff Barnett; scratch winners, Trish Saunders and Pat Cogbill.

Thursday, December 17: Barrie Robinson Salver – first, Roger Plant, Betty Longley, Eileen Mahoney, Rory Gibbons; second, Keith Davison, Tony Haworth, David Rance, Alwyn Hill.

The club meets twice a week on Saturday and Thursday at the Awel-y-Mor centre, 7pm – 10.15pm. Visitors welcome. To contact the club, call our secretary Trish – 01656 785794.

TH

Vale bridge results

RESULTS for the Vale of Glamorgan bridge club for December 21:

1st Steve Burgoyne & John Evans 63.75%, 2nd Mike Best & Kevin Maddox 62.73 %, 3rd Irene Thomas & Graham Jones 57.95%.

Pictured above are John Henson and Geoff Tinkler, winners of this year's annual Claret Cup competition, accepting their trophy from chairman Graham Norris.

LE

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www.llantwit-major-today.co.uk
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www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

Competition for golf club's junior players

AN end of season Christmas competition for the boy's golf team at St Andrew's Major Golf Club was organised by the club's professional, John Hastings, recently, with an additional prize for the most original and funniest hat.

A skills competition which included longest and most accurate drives, short game and putting challenges were set, with the winners of each competition awarded with chocolate prizes which were consumed on the spot!

It was a really great way to round off the 2015 season which has seen a big all round improvement in each of the juniors' golf games and all the boys had a wonderful time.

The fun and games finished in the clubhouse where one of the club's staff judged the funny hat competition, the winner being Harry Dawson who made a Morris Dancer-style creation complete with club tie!.

JH

The Kenfig Hill seconds hold on for friendly win

IT was never going to be a day for running rugby when Kenfig Hill seconds took on Maesteg Celtic seconds in a friendly at Garth Park.

On a heavy pitch which had suffered with recent heavy rain then both sides struggled to play with any continuity.

Celtic took advantage early on with strong driving play from their forwards which eventually led to a try from a driving lineout which wasn't converted.

There was no further score in the first half from either side although Kenfig Hill went close on a number of occasions with the final pass just not going to hand.

In the second half Kenfig Hill managed to string some passages of play together and finally managed a score from their top try scorer this season, prop Dan Dryden, which wasn't converted.

Kenfig Hill had their tails up playing most of the game in the Celtic half and scored again with fly half Mathew Burnell stepping inside and going over for a score which was converted by full back Michael Rawnson.

Celtic came back strongly and went over again from a driving maul in the final few minutes. However, the conversion was missed and Kenfig Hill held on for a 12-10 win.

Chris Leyshon and Gethyn Bassett were the pick of the Kenfig Hill forwards and several youth players also performed well.

DHD

Boxing day double for Evan and Adam

TRAINER Evan Williams and jockey Adam Wedge teamed up to land a nice little double at Wincanton on Boxing Day.

The first leg was initiated when six-year-old King's Odyssey, a 10-3 chance, beat the odds-on favourite Southfield Vic by three and a quarter lengths in the Harry Dufosee Novices' Chase, and in the closing Open NH Flat race, four-year-old My Liege, a 5-1 shot, finished a length and a quarter ahead of Chelsea Flyer.

Sunday's rained off Coral Welsh Grand National will now be staged on January 9.

BRIAN LEE

Barry and District tables

CRIB DIVISION 1:

West End 8, Wyndham Cons 7; Moors Boys 12, Liberals 3.

League table - Wyndham Cons 87, Liberals 86, West End Runaways 84, West End 83, Cadoxton Cons 75, Rhoose Social 72, Moors Boys 68.

SKITTLES DIVISION 1:

Sea View B 6, Rhoosters 1; King William XII 1, Rhoose Social B 6; Slammers 6, Liberals C 1; Rhoose Social C 2, Rhoose Social A 5; West End D 7, Cambrian Flyers 0; Liberals A 2, Rugby Club 5; Barries Boys 2, West End C 5.

League table: Sea View B 64, West End D 52.5, Rhoose Social B 48.5, King William XII 46.5, Rugby Club 46.5, West End C 43, Slammers 40.5, Allsorts 35, Barries Boys 34.5, Liberals A 32.5, Rhoose Social A 32, Rhoosters 31.5, Rhoose Social C 26.5, Liberals C 24.5, Cambrian Flyers 23.

SNOOKER DIVISION 1:

Savoy A 5, CaddyAllstars 0; Rhoose Social C 2, Cadoxton Cons Z 3; Rhoose Social B 1, Harbour B 4; West End C 2, Wyndham Cons A 3; Penarth Cons B 3, Market Street C 2.

League table: Savoy A 52, Harbour B 49, West End C 38, Wyndham Cons A 37, Cadoxton Cons B 32, *Cadoxton Cons Z 29, Rhoose Social C 26, Rhoose Social B 23, Penarth Cons B 19, Caddy Allstars 18, Market Street C 18.

SNOOKER DIVISION 2:

Cadoxton Cons A 2, Market Street B 3; Savoy B 3, Sully Sports A 2; Liberators 5, West End B 0; Penarth Cons A 3, Wyndham, Cons C 2; Services Social B 3, West End A 2.

League table: Liberators 44, Services Social B 42, Penarth Cons A 37, Market Street B 36, Savoy B 34, Cadoxton Cons A 31, Wyndham Cons C 31, West End A 25, Sully Sports A 24, West End B 20, Wyndham Cons D 16

(* = points deducted)

All league & cup fixtures and results at www.barryleagues.co.uk and on Facebook - search for 'barry leagues'.

JW

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Barry Beavers' swimming coaches receive awards

Courtney Rogers, Layla Rogers, Sarah Davies and Chris Economides receive their awards from the MP.

A GROUP of Vale swimming coaches have been presented with certificates to mark the completion of the nationally-recognised Halliwick Foundation Course.

Courtney Rogers, Layla Rogers, Sarah Davies and Chris Economides received their awards at Barry Leisure Centre from the Vale MP, Alun Cairns.

The Halliwick Foundation runs courses for swimming coaches who work with people with disabilities. Chris Economides and other coaches are at Barry Leisure Centre every Saturday, providing expert teaching techniques to swimmers of all ages with a range of disabilities.

Mr Cairns said: "It is testament to the dedication of these volunteers that the highest standards of swimming skills have been recognised by the respected Halliwick Foundation. I have seen at first hand the effort, expertise and dedication from everyone at Barry Beavers – the recognition in the wider community is well deserved."

Evan's Ffos Las hat-trick

LLANCARFAN'S Evan Williams is in unstoppable form. The 'Welsh Wizard' gave his followers plenty to smile about at Ffos Las on Monday when he repeated his hat-trick of the previous year scoring with *Pobbles Bay* (8-1), *Clyne* (2-1) and *Prime Venture* (4-1).

Then, 24 hours later at far flung Catterick, his only runner at the meeting, *Poulanassy*, ridden by Adam Wedge, beat the odds-on favourite *Captain Bocelli* by one and a quarter lengths in the novices' hurdle.

Adam Wedge also rode *Pobbles Bay* and *Clyne* while Conor Ring was aboard *Prime Venture*. Debra Hamer, who hails from the Vale, was successful with *Supreme Bob* at Ffos Las in the same race she won the previous year with *Magical Man*.

BRIAN LEE

Good year for PG10

PG10 Coaching is celebrating another record-breaking season, with thousands of junior players taking part in football activities.

The FAW and UEFA 'fun football' accredited football provider, which is also affiliated to Premier League club Everton FC, has development centres in the Vale, Swansea and Pencoed, and provides coaching and sport opportunities for children and young people of all abilities, aged between four-17 years of age.

Many famous sporting names have supported PG10 this season, and junior players have also met star players from Real Madrid, Everton, Barcelona and Chelsea such as Iker Casillas, Sergio Ramos, Isco, Cesc Fabregas and many more.

With more opportunities being planned for 2016 it certainly is a exciting time to be part of PG10 - to get involved with PG10 please email petegriff10@hotmail.co.uk or visit www.pg10coaching.co.uk.

PG

International football honours for Vale girls

THREE players from a local female club 'Vale Ladies & Girls FC' received international recognition recently, attending a three day Wales national under-15 team camp.

Anais Trinci, Grace Horrell and Jasmine Rowley were all selected for the get-together, which sees the most talented female players at their age group come together for training camps based in Cardiff and Newport, run by staff at the Welsh Football Trust.

On the final day, the girls played a friendly match against a local boy's academy team, running out 4-0 winners with Horrell grabbing two of the goals.

This is fantastic recognition for three players that have worked very hard over recent years and just shows the opportunities that now exist for female players in what is becoming a hugely popular sport for girls.

Vale Girls chairman Luke Williams commented: "It is fantastic to see players that have been members of our club from the very beginning back in 2012 progressing onto the international stage at junior level.

"All three of these players have shown determination to get to this level and hopefully this gives them a taste of a possible career in the senior game one day.

"Our club has quickly developed into the largest female setup in Wales in just over three years and we have a large number of talented players who will hopefully go on to achieve similar recognition in the future."

The club currently have over 230 female players from age seven through to its senior ladies teams, who operate as Barry Town Utd Ladies following the two club's partnership that started in the summer.

The partnership has already been seen as a huge success for the female club with training sessions and matches taking place on a weekly basis at the newly installed all-weather 3G pitch at Jenner Park Stadium.

"The new playing surface at Jenner Park has provided us with the best training facility in the area, as well as being able to get matches played during the difficult winter period.

"The partnership with Barry Town has taken the club to the next level of development as we aspire to become a major force in the game over the next few years," Williams added.

To find out more information about the club or to find out how to get involved please visit the club website at: www.valegirlsfc.co.uk.

LW

Barrivale bridge

LATEST results from Barrivale Bridge Club for December 15:

1st Mark Roderick 74.44 per cent; 2nd Peter Millar 62.38; =3rd Maurice Wuetherick 60.00 and Mick Green 60.00. Dave Thomas won on handicap.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale. A partner may be arranged if required. If you would like to join, telephone 01446 418380 or 01446 733425 or 01446 735592 or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm.

DR

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Griff Davies is tackled by a Newcastle Emlyn defender. PICTURES BY GLENNSPORTS.

Bridgend Athletic slip to disappointing defeat at strugglers

Lewis Evans looks for an opening.

UNFORTUNATELY, before their largest crowd of the season at the Bridgend Brewery Field, Bridgend Athletic served up their most inept display of the season and were well beaten by fellow strugglers Newcastle Emlyn by 40 points to 5.

The tone was set in the first minute when the Athletic were penalised at a line out, giving Newcastle Emlyn's wing Daniel Davies the opportunity to open the scoring.

From the restart Emlyn were themselves penalised, but the Athletic's kicker, Lewis Evans, pulled his kick wide. In the 10th minute the Athletic's defence was sliced through and although they halted the break just in front of their posts they were penalised and Davies extended the lead to 6-0. A third Davies penalty followed as the Athletic were regularly transgressing.

Athletic centre Lewis Evans then broke from inside his own half only to misjudge a final scoring pass to wing Rhys Ward Jones, allowing Emlyn to break away on the counter attack and only desperate defence kept out the visitors.

On the half hour the Athletic were awarded a penalty inside the Emlyn 22. Lewis Evans took a quick tap penalty and was halted just short of the try line.

A series of drives were rewarded when captain Sean Williams twisted and turned out of a tackle to cross near the posts. Unfortunately, Evans pulled his third kick wide of the posts and instead of leading 13-9, the Athletic found themselves trailing 9-5. Worst was to follow as from the restart, Newcastle Emlyn gained possession and created an overlap for centre Steffan Evans to cross wide out to put his side 14-5 ahead at the break.

The second half saw the Athletic have their use of a stiff breeze. However it was the visitors, with attacking rugby from deep inside their own half, aided by poor tackling, who crossed for two tries from Teifion Davis in the first seven minutes of the half to open up a 26-5 lead.

The Athletic had little to offer in attack and it was no surprise when late in the half Emlyn, who were causing panic amongst the Athletic backs, crossed for two further tries from wing Daniel Davies. He added both conversions for a match haul of 25 points

Athletic wing Rhys Ward Jones nearly crossed in the closing minute, but put a foot in touch as a tackle came in while crossing the try line.

This win closed the gap between Newcastle Emlyn and the Athletic to three points, when the home fans were looking for a 12 points breathing space prior to the game.

The back row of Sean Williams, Griff Davies and Stuart Edbrook and scrum half Jake Williams tried hard throughout, but lacked support from most of their fellow players.

The Athletic now face two away games at Glynneath and Beddau before returning to the Brewery Field on January 19 to face promotion hopefuls RGC 1404.

The coaches must restore confidence in the team before these fixtures – let's hope this game was a little too much festive cheer affecting the performance! The club would like to thank Mr Huw Tudor of Mair's B&B for sponsoring the fixture.

AB

INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL STARS VISIT CYNFFIG SCHOOL

WELSH international basketball players from the Cardiff Met Archers team recently visited a girls' basketball festival at Cynffig School.

Welsh players Emily Stradling and Chloe Richards helped with the coaching, with fellow Archers players Azeb Smalley, Judit Fritz and Beth Jones also visiting on the day.

Girls from Coleg Cymuneddol Y Dderwen , Cynffig, Porthcawl and Maesteg Comprehensive schools took part in the festival, which was set up to get more girls active and involved in a sport they may not have necessarily tried before.

The festival was arranged by Bridgend County Borough Council's Active Young People Department as part of the Girls' Network, a group which was set up to promote physical activity and exercise among young girls.

Cowbridge under-13s battle Barry RFC in game that survived the rain

Action from Cowbridge under-13s' game against Barry RFC.

THIS fixture last Sunday morning between Cowbridge RFC under-13s and Barry RFC must have been one of only a few to take place, given the preceding week's rainfall, but the Barry pitch was in a very playable condition, though the second half did turn into a bit of a mud bath for all.

Both sides were keen to play, with Barry opening the scoring with a quick, kick-and-chase try that caught Cowbridge napping. A further well worked try from one of the opposition's big, fast running centres saw Cowbridge quickly trying to reassert their defence and counter attack, into the strong head wind.

Cowbridge drove play to the Barry line with excellent approach work from the dominant Cowbridge pack, who through good power play, came away with a try from close range by Lucas Reid, well supported by Will Clark at second row, after some close range sniping by scrum half Jack Riley.

With the wind behind them in the second half, Cowbridge again pressed forward, but they were hit by two well-worked breakaway tries by Barry, both of which were excellent 70-metre run-ins after well executed turnovers.

Regrouping, Cowbridge pressed again, and this time strong running prop forward Max Hall, with great pace and determination, shrugged off several would be tacklers to run-in from 15 metres out and score a well-worked try, after good approach work by Rhys Williams at No 8.

Ten minutes later, he did a repeat performance, to claim a brace after a scrum against the head. Harry Whitaker landed a tricky conversion that skimmed the cross bar, for the extra points.

Pushing for another try, close to Barry's line, Cowbridge spilled the ball and the strong running Barry centre scored a superb 60 metre solo try, again pushing the Cowbridge defence out wide.

The game finished shortly after, 30-17 to Barry. The final score reflected a split performance from a dominant Cowbridge pack and the fast paced, strong running centres of Barry.

TD

Squash club get set for second half of season

COWBRIDGE Squash club have just completed a very successful first half of the season with two teams promoted after winning their division.

The Cowbridge A team, captained by No 1 player, Nick Guard, topped the South Wales Division 3 East. The team of Guard, Jon Bisson, Garfield Leask, Simon Payne and Niall Sloan all contributed well to the team and Niall Sloan went through the first half of the season unbeaten.

The Cowbridge B team were also promoted by winning the South Glamorgan Division 2. The team lost only two of their 12 matches and there were not many individual defeats.

Captain Richard Ford went through the season unbeaten with 11 wins. The regular team included Charlie Graddon, Julian Jenkins, Richard Ford, Chris Ranger and Dave Matthews.

The Cowbridge C team struggled in the second half of the league campaign because of a series of untimely injuries to the top three players and unfortunately the C team were unable to avoid relegation to South Glamorgan Division 3 for the second half of the season.

The team was captained by Richard Kyte, and the regular squad included Paul Reynish, Tony Steele, James Burnett, Alan Parker and Gian Bianchi.

In January, for the first time in the history of the squash club, a Cowbridge D team will enter into the South Glamorgan Division 3.

Hopefully this will give the opportunity to many new members to play competitive team squash, and it will also provide an opportunity for some promising juniors to play competitive team squash.

If anyone is interested to join Cowbridge Squash Club club, please contact the membership secretary, David Garnham at davidjohngarnham@gmail.com.

RF

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